Charlotte Brontë

1816-1916

A CENTENARY MEMORIAL

Prepared by the Brontë Society
Edited by Butler Wood, F.R.S.L.
Foreword by Mrs. Humphry Ward

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CHARLOTTE BRONTË

A CENTENARY MEMORIAL

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

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A CENTENARY MEMORIAL

PREPARED BY THE BRONTË SOCIETY
EDITED BY BUTLER WOOD, F.R.S.L.

WITH A FOREWORD BY MRS. HUMPHRY WARD
AND 3 MAPS AND 28 ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

As President of the Brontë Society, I have been asked—for my last appearance in that honourable place!—to write a few words of Preface to this "Centenary Memorial" of Charlotte Brontë. In my own paper, which was read at Bradford this spring, and is printed in these pages, I have said all that the reader of this book will want to hear from myself on its ever-enthralling subject. But there remains for me the pleasant task of pointing such a reader to the variety of Brontë knowledge and criticism which the other essays in this volume contain. They are no drilled chorus, but the fresh impressions and the first-hand research of competent writers who have spoken their minds both with love and courage. Very different judgments will be found in them on very important points, such as the relative rank of the two great sisters, or of Charlotte Brontë's three novels, *inter se*, or of her relation to her contemporaries. This seems to me all to the good. It is by

difference that we all think; and "fret our minds to an intenser play."

But what *is* unanimous, is not so much the warm praise of Charlotte Brontë, in which this band of writers, from their various points of view, ultimately agree, as the testimony they bear to the feeling she still stirs in *us*—to the delight she still gives to this later generation, after more than half a century. The security of her fame, we see, is yearly greater, as her star rises surely and steadily to its place in the nineteenth-century heaven. Fluctuations of opinion there have been, and must always be, in the case of those who, like the Brontës, challenge opinion, and, so to speak, "take it by force." But it seems to me that the fluctuations are over, and the verdict given. And the members of the Brontë Society, during the last twenty years, have certainly helped to make it what it is. Their unworthy President bids them now a grateful farewell.

MARY A. WARD.

September, 1917.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Brontë Society discussed the question of celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's birthday it was felt that the occasion should be marked by something of a more permanent nature than the public function which had been arranged to be held at Haworth, and it was therefore decided to prepare for publication a volume which should serve as a literary souvenir of the Centenary year. Steps were thereupon immediately taken to this end, and thanks to the willing co-operation of some writers of eminence who have notable sympathy with the objects of the Society, it has been made possible to bring the present work before the public.

In addition to contributions written specially for the occasion, a selection has been made from the *Transactions* of the Society of those articles which appear to be appropriate to the purpose of the volume. They include appreciations by the late Dr. Richard Garnett, Sir Sidney Lee, Prof.

C. E. Vaughan, Halliwell Sutcliffe, and J. Keighley Snowden, and are included because it is felt that they are well worthy of a more extended publicity than it was possible to give them in the limited issue of the *Transactions* of the Society.

Amongst the illustrations will be found a facsimile of the circular issued by the Brontë sisters when contemplating the formation of a Boarding School at the Haworth Parsonage in 1844. It is reproduced from the only known leaflet now existing, which is preserved in the Haworth Museum.

The Council of the Society desire to record their gratitude to Mr. A. C. Benson, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Bishop Welldon, Sir Sidney Lee, Mr. J. Keighley Snowden, Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe, Prof. C. E. Vaughan, and Mr. H. E. Wroot, for the help they have generously rendered ; to the Editor of *The Times* for permission given to reprint Mr. Spielmann's article on "Charlotte Brontë in Brussels ;" to Mr. M. E. Hartley, of Bradford, for preparing the subject index ; to Mr. Harry H. Wood, for preparing the maps, and to the President of the Society, Mrs. Humphry Ward, for writing a foreword to the volume and for permission to include her Centenary Address.

SOME THOUGHTS ON CHARLOTTE BRONTË

By Mrs. HUMPHRY WARD

SOME THOUGHTS ON CHARLOTTE BRONTË

An Address delivered by Mrs. Humphry Ward to the Brontë Society, at Bradford, Friday, March 30, 1917.

A hundred years ago last April, a third daughter —Charlotte—was born to the Rev. Patrick Brontë and Maria Brontë, his wife, at the Yorkshire village of Thornton, in the parish of Bradford. The little Charlotte's elder sisters Maria and Elizabeth were still babies themselves when she appeared, and when not quite four years later the whole family migrated to Haworth, near Keighley, and took up their residence in the small parsonage house, on the edge of a Yorkshire moor, which is now so famous in the history of literature, there were six children, of whom the eldest was not much more than six years old. Their gentle, refined mother, worn-out perhaps by child-bearing, died the year after the move, and the six wonderful children were left motherless.

Was there ever such a brood! Think of

them in that first year at Haworth! Their mother, whom they rarely saw, was dying; their father was not fond of children, and lived shut up in his study. Maria, aged seven, was the mother and teacher of the rest. She would shut herself up with a newspaper, in the little fireless room upstairs which was called the "children's study"—there was no nursery in that melancholy house!—and would be able to tell the others all kinds of things when she came out, about politics and Parliament, about "the Duke," Charlotte's particular hero, and Bonaparte, the Duke's vanquished foe, now safely caged in St. Helena.

When the children went for a walk, they went out all six together, on the moor behind the house, alone, hand in hand, the elder ones helping the babies. They never made a noise; their happiest hours were spent whispering to each other in the firelight on winter evenings; somehow they all learnt to read—how, it is not recorded; and books, the moors, and each other sufficed them. They had no child friends, no children's books, no pretty frocks, no children's parties. Presently, their father, who never walked with them, or had a meal with them, began to realize they were not like other children; and we have the well-known story of his examination of them, when the eldest was ten and the youngest four. He made each

HAWORTH PARSONAGE.

From photograph taken in Charlotte Brontë's time.

To face p. 16.

child wear a mask in turn and speak through the mask, so as to give it courage. Anne, the baby, was asked what a child like her most wanted. She answered, Mr. Brontë says—is it quite credible?—"Age and experience." While the eldest, Maria, aged ten, when asked what was the best mode of spending time, replied :—"By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity." A year later, the child who gave that answer was dead, after that appalling year at the Cowan Bridge School, of which Mrs. Gaskell gives an account which has never been substantially shaken. Her father left it on record that, long before she died, he could talk to her about any leading topic of the day, as though she were a grown person.

But still, she died, poor little motherless mother!—and her younger sister, Elizabeth, also died. Mercifully Charlotte and Emily were rescued from Cowan Bridge in time, and then for nearly five years the marvellous children were happy together in their own way. The sisters loved each other passionately ; they were proud of their only brother, who was taught by his father and kept at home ; they were not much interfered with by their aunt, who had come to keep the house ; they read the Bible, Shakespeare, Bunyan, Addison, Johnson, Sheridan, Cowper, for the past ; Scott, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, for the moderns, with

Blackwood's Magazine and a full supply of newspapers, both Whig and Tory. They were all politicians and desperate Tories; and the record of what they wrote—the plays and poems and miscellaneous tales and articles, in the "little writing," now so eagerly sought for by the autograph collector, which most of us can only read with a magnifying glass—before Charlotte, the eldest, was fourteen, is more amazing even than the stories of wonder-children in Evelyn's *Diary*, or John Stuart Mill's recollections of his own performances under the age of five. The mere list of Charlotte's childish works, in twenty-two MS. volumes, occupies a page and a half of Mrs. Gaskell's biography.

Yet when Charlotte went to Roehead School, at fourteen, she seemed at first so ignorant—it was grammar and geography she was tested in—that a kind schoolmistress told her pityingly she must be placed with the little ones. Charlotte, however, cried so much that a chance was given her among the bigger girls. And then—stupefaction!—the child who knew no grammar was found to be steeped in literature and history.

"She looked a little old woman"—said the schoolfellow, Mary Taylor, writing to Mrs. Gaskell;—"so short-sighted that she always appeared to be seeking something, and moving her head from side to side to catch a sight of it. She was very shy and nervous, and spoke

with a strong Irish accent. We thought her very ignorant! But then she would confound us by knowing things that were out of our range altogether!" She told stories out of a "magazine" written by herself and her sisters. Once her schoolfellows made her try to play some ball game with them. She tried, but she could not see the ball, so they "put her out." It was pleasanter, she said, to stand under the trees in the playground and watch the shadows and the sky. Sometimes she would talk politics eagerly; and her Radical schoolfellows, reflecting the opinions of Radical homes, found it was of no use to argue with Charlotte about the Duke of Wellington (the Reform Bill of '32 was just passing)—for she knew everything about him, and "we knew nothing." Her talent for story-telling was endless. She and her sisters called it "making out." The whole family used to "'make out' histories," says Mary Taylor again, "and invent characters and events. She picked up every scrap of information concerning painting, sculpture, poetry, music, etc., as if it were gold. She never lost a moment of time! She knew she must provide for herself."

Yet, except for the year at Cowan Bridge, Charlotte's childhood was not unhappy.

The power which overshadowed it, as also that of her sisters, brought its own rewards. They were themselves well aware of its nature. Emily

in particular has paid it immortal homage. Again and again in those strange poems, written in the simplest and commonest of metres, scarcely one of which is without its touch of genius, while half a dozen belong to the main poetic treasure of our race, Emily points to the force which made the bare, spartan life of the bleak parsonage house a life of happiness, often of joyous excitement, to the three sisters, so long as they had each other to cling to, and before Branwell's decadence began.

> "Silent is the house; all are laid asleep:
> One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,
> Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze
> That whirls the wildering drift, and bends
> . . . the groaning trees.
> Burn then little lamp; glimmer straight and clear.—
> Hush! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air;
> He for whom I wait thus ever comes to me;
> Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my constancy."

What was the "Strange Power" that Emily thus invokes? Simply Imagination—Poetry, "making out." Emily was possessed by it; so in a more normal degree was Charlotte, and even the gentle and timid Anne.

In Emily, it was mingled first with a passionate love of home and country, and then with ideas of violence and terror, partly suggested to her by books—the German Romantics

whom she read at Brussels, or in translations printed in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which came regularly to the parsonage—and partly by her own wild moors, and what she guessed of the life around her, divining it from a face here, and a fragment of talk there, seeing it all under a light of storm, lit from the fire of her own nature. It is probable, I think, that the quickened pulse of phthisis, of which she died, may have had something to do with the peculiar intensity, the self-devouring strength, of Emily's genius. I have myself watched the effect of the continuous fever of phthisis on a literary gift, in the case of a great historian; there is no doubt that it lent an added fire and energy to his work; and I have often thought that the same cause partly conditioned Emily Brontë's poetic gift, and partly explains the astonishing glow and concentration of *Wuthering Heights*.

But it was only an *intensifying* cause. With Charlotte, imagination was a cradle gift no less than with Emily; and Anne, in frailer, feebler measure, was played on by the same power.

"The faculty of imagination," writes Charlotte to Mr. Williams, "lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago" (that is, after the death of her sister Anne); "its active exercise has kept my head above water since!"

And it was imagination of a strong racial type. Charlotte at school, says Mary Taylor,

spoke with a strong Irish accent. It should never indeed be forgotten that the Brontës were Irish on their father's side, and Cornish on their mother's. That is to say, they were Celtic by race, and they inherited the Celtic gifts.

"Never laugh at us Celts!" said Ernest Renan, himself a Breton;—"we shall not build the Parthenon—marble is not our affair. But we know how to seize upon the heart and soul; we have a power of piercing which belongs only to us. We plunge our hands into the entrails of man and bring them out, like the witches in *Macbeth*, full of the secrets of the infinite. We have no turn for practical life, for chaffering and bargaining. We are difficult to move. We die if you tear us from home. In the heart of our race there is a perpetual spring of madness. Fairy-land is our domain, the fairy-land that only pure lips and faithful hearts can enter!"

How many of these famous phrases suit the Brontës! "We shall not build the Parthenon!" No one need look for classical perfection in the Brontës. There is a morbid and feverish inequality in much of Charlotte's work, which drew down upon her the critics of her own day, and made Edward Fitzgerald call her "the Mistress of the Disagreeable." The structure, the building, both of *Shirley* and *Villette* break every rule; and Charlotte, when invited by George

Henry Lewes to consider the mild wisdom and artistic perfection of Jane Austen, turned almost angrily away. Charlotte and Emily are Romantics through and through, and the Celts in history and literature are the eternal Romantics. For they are not thinking—striving towards—an artistic whole, in which feeling, poetry, passion, shall be all brought into bondage to a shaping and fastidious instinct, which is, in truth, the ultimate thing. They are grasping at poetry and passion for their own sakes, careless what happens, so long as they can exercise the piercing and arresting power they are conscious of possessing.

Again : "In the heart of our race there rises," says Renan, "a spring of madness." And there is a note of madness in the Brontë genius ; conspicuously in Emily, but to be heard now and then even in Charlotte. The wonderful chapter in *Villette* describing Lucy Snowe, lonely, miserable, and delirious, when she is left forsaken in the *pensionnat* through the summer holidays, has in it something non-sane ; one hears through it the footfall of one who has known the borderlands of the mind, where dream and melancholy rule, where, for the time, responsibility and reflection die. The genius of the poet and rhapsodist—and it is essentially to that category that the Brontë genius belongs—has always been held, as we know, to involve an element of

wildness, of something which marks it from the ordinary gifts of men—

> Faster, faster,
> Oh Circe, goddess,
> Let the wild thronging train,
> The bright procession of eddying forms,
> Sweep through my soul!

It was in a mood—a state—not far distant from this that Charlotte Brontë wrote the astonishing pages at the end of *Villette*, where Lucy Snowe wanders through the midnight Brussels *en fête*, unknown, unrecognized—save for that one sharp glance from the eyes of Dr. John—herself played on by all the various impressions of night, crowd, colour, fire, and by the different passions and interests of the persons she sees; passing through them like the very spirit of romance, and rendering scenes and characters in a marvellous language—rich, flowing, now wildly and satirically gay, now grave and quiet like the old Flemish streets into which she turns from the noise and illumination of the park—just as Schumann or Brahms would have rendered them in music.

It is indeed this quality of poetry, sometimes piercingly plaintive and touching, at others grim and fiery, with interludes of extravagance or grotesque, that establishes the claim of Charlotte and Emily Brontë to their high place in literature. Their claim, of course, is the Romantic claim

—the claim of George Sand and Victor Hugo, the claim of Coleridge, and in the main the claim of Byron. But it was specially conditioned in their case first by the Irish—the Celtic—strain of blood; and secondly by a power of observation, shrewd or ironic, which is just as characteristic of the Celt as the power of poetry, the touch of madness, the melancholy, the note of fairy-land—which Renan claims for his race. Look, for instance, at the work of J. M. Synge, or at some of the verse of the most modern Irish poets. You will find in it exactly the mingling of these two elements; poetry—that is, the sense of mystery and beauty in the world; together with an eager interest in the human reality, often in its most sordid and trivial aspects, which is subordinate, indeed, to the poetic power, but never fails in the end to bring that power to the test of truth, even to find a puckish delight in doing so. Charlotte, for instance, is eloquent in praise of "observation"—she abhors sentimentalism. Nevertheless, when you present her with a realist like Jane Austen, she recoils. And she would certainly have recoiled still further from the realists of to-day. She would have found nothing, I believe, to please her in *Clayhanger* or *Kips*. The detail in her novels, good or bad, is always subordinate to the "strange power" whom Emily invoked, to whom Charlotte turned when she was "sinking" under grief.

The school detail, for instance, in *Jane Eyre*, the curates and the Yorkes in *Shirley*; and all that marvellous detail in *Villette* which has for ever preserved, in its very habit as it lived, that *pensionnat* of Madame Beck's in the Rue Fossette:—one may look upon it all as a good illustration of a saying of Goethe's. In one of his talks with Eckermann he says that the rarest and best kind of imagination is that which spends itself on *the truth near at hand*. Many writers, he says, with direct reference to the monsters and marvels of the German Romantic movement, prefer to write of strange countries and times, and things they know nothing about, and absurdly believe that they cultivate their imagination by doing so. The master in poetry or fiction is he who can give significance and beauty to the simplest incidents of the life he knows. This is the "truth embodied in a tale" which conquers the world. But the whole question is as to the degree in which the poetic faculty can transform and transmute the detail it takes from reality.

Emily Brontë possessed the power of transmutation to a supreme degree. In spite of the apparent realism of *Wuthering Heights*, its harsh or brutal elements, it is passionate poetry—though without a trace of "passion" in the ordinary sense—from first to last. Charlotte possessed the transmuting power less perfectly than Emily. But *Villette* is the supreme example of it in her. All

this small detail of a girl's school, of its activities and ambitions, of the persons living in it, and the forces acting upon them, will live when half the books and writers we are accustomed to admire in this generation are wholly forgotten. The race is not to the clever—or the voluble—or the industrious—or the ingenious. When nobody ever wants to look at *The New Machiavelli* again, still less at *Anne Veronica*, *Villette* will be read and loved. Why? Not, of course, because of its particular detail as compared with any other, but because of the poetry and personality that hold the detail, like the sunny water in which the river-weeds sway transfigured. That "strange power" which Emily invoked has touched it and given it immortality.

But Charlotte was not always so happy in her dealing with detail. The detail of the country house scenes in *Jane Eyre* is extravagant and absurd—a little vulgar besides. The clerical detail of *Shirley* leaves me uncomfortable and unconvinced. I wish that Charlotte had not, as she confessed to Mr. Williams, photographed the three curates from the life. They have the faults of photography, in its cruder stages. They are not transmuted; they remain raw and clumsy. And that being so, the magic of art having failed them, the moral question raises its head, the question of justification; and one remembers perhaps, with discomfort, a letter printed by Mr. Shorter,

in which an old friend of Mr. James W. Smith, the original of the Rev. Peter Malone—himself the little Sweeting of the novel—denounces Charlotte Brontë's "photograph" of Peter Malone as "false and cruel."

The moral question may also be raised with regard to *Villette*. It is admitted that Madame Heger was the original of Madame Beck. But Madame Heger had shown Charlotte Brontë much kindness, and she was so justly hurt by the portrait of Madame Beck that when Mrs. Gaskell went over to Brussels in search of material for her famous *Life*, Madame Heger refused to see her. And yet, in time, you have the Heger family, as it seems to me, recognizing, with a personal magnanimity which is dependent on a keen sense of art and literature, that *Villette* is a wonderful book, that it is quite possible to vindicate kind and motherly Madame Heger from Charlotte Brontë's misjudgment of the real woman—but that *Villette* without Madame Beck would have been a shorn masterpiece. So that artistically Charlotte Brontë is justified. That is to say—thinking of *literature*—we cannot regret it. For—"qui veut la fin, veut les moyens."

But where the end—of artistic fusion—has not been reached, where the material taken from life remains crude, where the breath of the "maker" has not passed upon it, there the poet and the story-teller becomes again an ordinary person to

be judged by ordinary rules; and although Madame Beck is triumphant, the curates in *Shirley* may be—at any rate partially—wished away!

Imagination, then—Celtic imagination—with its head in the clouds, its heart on fire, its hands full of treasures gathered from the common earth, and its feet walking in and loving the wilder, lonelier paths of life—it is so we must conceive Charlotte's greatest gift. She is a dreamer who observes, who is always observing; and she lives precisely because of the mingling of these two strains in her—the power of poetry and the power of bringing the poetic faculty to bear on the truth nearest her, the facts of her own daily life. "I have seen so little," she complains once or twice. But what she has made of that little! Beside *Villette*, a novel of a girls' school, how poor and ephemeral—already—do the novels look which are half journalism—that is, either rhetoric, or information, poured out for other ends than the creative, the poetic end, like *The New Machiavelli*, which I have already quoted; or the novels which rest on an elaborate "documentation," like Zola's *Lourdes*. Poetry, truth, feeling; and a passion which is of the heart, not of the senses—these are Charlotte's secrets. They are simple, but they are not to be had by everybody for the asking. Loti in the *Pêcheur d'Islande*—Barrie in *The Window in Thrums*—many Russians in many books—Victor Hugo in much of *Les*

Misérables—George Sand in her Berri stories and in large sections of *Consuelo*—they, with many differences, stand in the same literary rank; they walk the same halls in the "House of Fame" with the Brontës.

There are, of course, other types and voices in the House of Fame; but to this race of singers and makers at least the golden gates are always open; to the passionate, the pure in heart, the sincere.

Well, we have claimed for Charlotte Brontë, the artist, imagination, truth, and power. It is one of the strongest grounds of her immortality that she was also a loving, faithful, suffering woman, with a personal story which, thanks to Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*, will never cease to touch the hearts of English folk while literature lasts. That best of biographies was given me when I was seventeen by a dear kinswoman—Matthew Arnold's youngest sister—now one of the few survivors who can remember the living Charlotte; and I vividly recollect its effect upon me. The story of the gifted children in the small grim Yorkshire parsonage, with its graveyard in front and its moors behind; their books, their plays, their life in dream worlds of their own, more real to them than the village world outside:—I knew it once by heart. I could see the parlour in the firelight, with the three whispering to each other; I could hear Martha and Tabby, their two maids,

in the kitchen. The long village street, the high moors behind the parsonage, the night winds blowing over them, the glory of the heather in summer, and the snow that covered them in winter; they were all familiar to me through Mrs. Gaskell's art—as to many others—before ever I set eyes on the real Haworth. And to one who had been from her childhood scribbling on her own account there was even greater fascination in the story of the memorable years—1846 and 1847—which saw the publication of the *Poems* by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. The sudden journey of the two sisters to London; their meeting with their astonished publisher, to whom their arrival first disclosed the identity of Currer Bell, the supposed male author of *Jane Eyre*—that book of which all the world was talking—with the shy, plainly dressed, tiny creature who, with suppressed excitement, put his own letter received from him in Yorkshire the day before into his hands as her credential: this too was a tale of which I knew every turn. And a year after the book was given me, I remember staying with a friend in Brunswick Square and dragging her out at night, to find Paternoster Row and the site at least of the Chapter Coffee House. I had never been in the City before, and I remember the thrill of the deserted streets, the strong lights and shades, the great dome hovering darkly over-

head, the darkness and silence of Paternoster Row and Amen Corner; then Fleet Street, with its illuminated newspaper offices; and, brooding over it all, the sense of history, and of the "mighty heart" of London, "lying still."

I little thought then that twenty years later I should myself be in daily communication, as an author, with the same Mr. George Smith in whose hands, on July 16, 1848, Charlotte Brontë had placed his own letter as the proof of her identity. I can never be grateful enough to fortune that "Dr. John" became my constant and generous friend, as he had been Charlotte Brontë's. When I first knew him in 1886, he was no longer indeed the "tall young man" of twenty-three whom Charlotte described in her letters from London. But he was still in every other respect the same man whose quick intelligence discovered the Brontë genius; whose endless kindness of heart and knowledge of the resources of life and science might well, had she but known him a few years earlier, have enabled Charlotte to save her sisters from premature death. When I made acquaintance with him he was over sixty, with a full and varied life behind him; the publisher of Thackeray and Matthew Arnold, of Trollope, Huxley, the Brownings, Leslie Stephen, and a score of others. The qualities that Charlotte Brontë knew and described in the picture of Graham Bretton,

who becomes the "Dr. John" of *Villette*, were all there, undimmed. The help of them was fully given to me through fourteen years of friendship, and I shall cherish while I live the memory of "Dr. John."

We often talked of Charlotte Brontë, and he spoke once to me, with a twinkle of humour, of the legend that he had proposed to her. Charlotte herself, of course, disposes of the notion, to begin with. She writes to Ellen Nussey that her young publisher and she "understand each other very well, and respect each other very sincerely. We both know the wide breach time has made between us; we do not embarrass each other, or very rarely; my six or eight years of seniority, to say nothing of the lack of all pretension to beauty, are a perfect safeguard." The "tall young man," like other tall young men, was indeed—as Miss Brontë guessed—very susceptible to beauty. The wife whom Charlotte Brontë did not live long enough to see, to whom, all her life, George Smith was blessing and sunshine, was beautiful even as I remember her last, in the year of the outbreak of war, 1914, when she was over eighty. But it was George Smith's gift for *friendship*—true, faithful friendship—which marked him out from others. Charlotte Brontë's short, sad life was made the happier by it in a score of ways; and I, brought forty years later into close and long relation with the same man, can only testify,

with a hundred others in like case, that success and fortune never spoiled "Dr. John." And it was his peculiar gift to be able to hand on this tradition of friendship in business relations to his colleague and successor in the historic firm of Smith and Elder. The recent death of his son-in-law, Mr. Reginald Smith, who married "Dr. John's" youngest daughter, and carried on the publishing business for sixteen years after George Smith's death, has left a gap in the lives of many men and women of this literary day, my own among them, which will hardly be filled. For both he and the great man who preceded him belonged to that small band in each generation who are able to infuse into the daily ways and actions of practical life the quality and beauty of their own high and beneficent spirit.

I have some other personal links with Charlotte Brontë which I like to think of. The interesting letter printed by Mrs. Gaskell as written by a "neighbour" in 1850, describing a visit to Haworth in that year, was written by my aunt and godmother, Mrs. W. E. Forster, the wife of the Yorkshire member of Parliament who later on became the Education Minister of 1870, and Irish Chief Secretary, in the terrible years 1880–2. Before that visit, however, Charlotte Brontë had made friends in the Lake country with my own people, the widow and children of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby; and last summer I talked over the

visit of Charlotte and Miss Martineau to Fox How, with Dr. Arnold's youngest daughter and only surviving child, who still remembers it. Miss Martineau and Charlotte Brontë came over to drink tea, and there was a young Oxonian in the room, who looked at them with amused and critical eyes, writing afterwards to a friend :—

"At seven came Miss Martineau and Miss Brontë (*Jane Eyre*) ; I talked to Miss Martineau (who blasphemes frightfully) about the prospects of the Church of England, and, wretched man that I am, promised to go and see her cow-keeping miracles to-morrow, I who hardly know a cow from a sheep. I talked to Miss Brontë (past thirty and plain, with expressive grey eyes, though) of her curates, of French novels, and her education in a school at Brussels, and sent the lions roaring to their dens at half-past nine."

Miss Brontë, who talked very little, was not apparently much drawn to the young author of *The Strayed Reveller*, which had appeared three years earlier. She thought his manner "foppish," and understood that "his theological opinions were very vague and unsettled." But she knew that already he was the author of "a volume of poems," which, however, she had not seen. I wish she had seen it : there are many things in that first volume which would have spoken to her. And I wish she could have foreseen that from that young unknown Matthew

Arnold, whom she met in the Fox How drawing-room, would come that tribute to her great sister Emily, which, long before the Brontë cult had risen to anything like its present height, bore testimony once again to that freemasonry, that quick mutual divination which marks the "little clan" of poets, to whom, from age to age, is left, in Keat's phrase, the carrying on of "great verse." But these things were hidden from the "expressive grey eyes" my uncle noticed. Only, as though some prescience of them touched her, as Miss Brontë left the room, she passed my aunt, then a girl of seventeen, who was holding the door open, and suddenly the little shy, silent woman said: "May I kiss you?" and to the girl's astonishment darted forward and kissed her. It was a very characteristic, a very Brontë-ish, touch. Compunction, perhaps, for that strange paralysis, that silence benumbing to herself and other people, which often fell upon her in society, and once—as we know from an inimitable page of Lady Ritchie's—drove Thackeray into letting himself out quietly from his own front door, in the very midst of a party he himself had gathered in her honour; quick feeling; quick gratefulness perhaps for the welcome given her by these unknown people: there is all this in it and more.

> "And did you once see Shelley plain,
> And did he stop and speak to you?"

It is with something of the same wistfulness, the same suppressed excitement as Browning here expresses, that one talks now with one of the very few persons in the world who ever saw Charlotte Brontë.

Finally, what is it that makes the charm? Along with the Celtic qualities, as we know, she had the Celtic faults—occasional arrogance, occasional vulgarity and extravagance. Emily Brontë had none of the loose rhetoric and shallow didactic into which Charlotte often fell. But for all that Charlotte wielded a natural magic of words, as George Sand did. There are passages in her letters—especially in those describing the deaths of her sisters—that belong to the noblest and most moving of English prose. To return to the phrase of M. Renan, she had the "gift of piercing"; she had been in fairy-land and brought back the tones of it—tones as often sad as gay; and she possessed in fiction an art of representation, especially an art of dialogue, which was all her own, instinct with poetry and life. Which was the greater, she or Emily? To my mind, Emily, by far. But one is reminded of another saying of Goethe's to Eckermann: "For twenty years the public has been disputing which is the greater, Schiller or I—and it ought to be glad that it has got a couple of fellows about whom it *can* dispute."

Well, Yorkshire too may be proud, I think,

that among its moors and heaths were reared not one Charlotte Brontë, but such a *par nobile fratrum* (to rescue the phrase of Horace from its original context) as Currer and Ellis Bell. Yorkshire does well to keep their memories green; to read, discuss them, and, at need, dispute about them.

"What do we mean by originality?" Goethe asks again. "As soon as we are born the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. And after all, what can we call our own except energy, strength, and will?"

"Energy, strength, and will." As writers, Charlotte and Emily possessed them all, to a marvellous degree. If you add feeling, fire, magic—poetry, in short!—you come as near perhaps as you can come to the definition of their place in Literature.

Pale sisters! children of the moorland scree,
Deep dale and murmuring river, where ye plied
All household arts, meek, passion-taught, and free,
Kinship your joy, and fantasy your guide!—
Ah! who again 'mid English heaths shall see
Such strength in frailest weakness, or so fierce
Behest on tender women laid, to pierce
The world's dull ear with burning poetry?
Whence was your spell?—and at what magic spring,
Under what guardian Muse, drank ye so deep
That still ye call, and we are listening;
That still ye plain to us, and we must weep?
—Ask of the winds that haunt the moors, what breath
Blows in their storms, outlasting life and death!

MRS. GASKELL.

To face p. 38.

A WORD ON CHARLOTTE BRONTË

By EDMUND GOSSE

A WORD ON CHARLOTTE BRONTË

THE century which has slipped by since the birth of Charlotte Brontë may roughly be divided, so far as she alone is concerned, into four equal sections which claim our attention. During the first of these she was preparing, in conditions at once extraordinarily romantic and of the most painful mediocrity, for her labours as a novelist. Another quarter of a century closes in her first apotheosis, the publication of Mrs. Gaskell's admirable Life of her. Exposed to new currents of popular taste, her reputation now began slowly to decline, till it was thought necessary to assert, by way of defence, that her works "will *one day* again be regarded as evidences of exceptional intellectual power." Throughout a final period this moderate estimate has been vastly exceeded. The apologist who would now claim for her no more praise than that would be laughed out of court, and what, in starting in a blaze of glory upon her second century, Charlotte Brontë most pathetically calls for is, not blank appreciation, but some judicious exercise of praise.

In the evolution of her fame, her disadvantages have been transformed into advantages, as toads are bewitched into pearls in some old fairy-story. The hard, dry atmosphere of Haworth, in the blast of a perpetual moral east wind; the narrowness of the stage which the three wonderful sisters trod; the ugliness which surrounded them; the barrier which divided them from the social amenities,—all these are elements in the miracle of their production, and each of these elements has added something to the fascination of their books. We read these with trebled interest because we know what the conditions were. But we are in danger of not perceiving that they were disadvantageous, of supposing that they added a lustre to the genius of the sisters, that they were intrinsically valuable. It is worse than useless to regret any of the facts of literary history, but at least we need not exult in them. Among the disadvantages of Charlotte I place very high the puritanism which surrounded her from her cradle, and which entered into her very bones. It made her uselessly and contentiously austere, and it darkened her outlook upon life. That artificial deepening of the shadows may render her work more picturesque, but it deprives it of harmony. It gives a certain aspect of the dried or shrivelled to Charlotte's books when we compare them with the serene fulness, the rich and harmonious

suavity, the ripeness, of the masterpieces of her supreme contemporary, George Sand.

The imagination of Charlotte Brontë, despite its prodigious vitality, was a little puerile. When she trusted to her own ears and eyes she was excellent, but the narrow range within which observation was possible for her leaves us to the last with an impression of her as a wonderful young person who never quite grew up. She has the impatience, the unreasonable angers and revolts, of an unappreciated adolescent. When she seems most certainly adult she has still her rebellious air of enduring tribulation with an angry fortitude. Her ignorance sets traps for her, and she falls into them without a struggle. Mrs. Humphry Ward has commented on the amazing conversations of the smart people at Thornfield Hall. Polite writers, indulging the snobbishness of literature, think it would have been "charming" to talk to Charlotte Brontë. It would probably have been disconcerting to the highest degree, and Lady Ritchie's recollection of the London visit should be a warning to such lioness-hunters of the imagination.

It is a pity, perhaps, that Charlotte, when the hour of unwelcome exile came, did not go to Paris instead of to Brussels. What her mind and her temperament needed then (in 1842) was sunshine, geniality, ease, and breadth. She

proceeded on her sordid journey with her nerves on edge, her fists clenched, her eyes set with a fierce derision. In the Belgium of those days there was nothing which could be expected to soften her asperities or to civilize her moorland savagery. There should have been, on the other hand, much for her to sympathize with in the attitude of her Parisian contemporaries, if merely in the remarkable spectacle of that conflict which was raging between the romantic and the realistic. It would have been a wholesome thing for Charlotte to have been persuaded that there are relations, conditions, aspirations in the human soul not dreamed of by Lucy Snowe or even by Jane Eyre. I do not think that her own creations would have thrilled us less, but in the long run probably more, if she had studied, with humility and complaisance, the processes of the mighty mind of Balzac. But she was protected against sympathy by a moral pride (we should call it arrogance if we were not so fond of her) which closed to her violent individuality all the pathways of instruction. She could only learn what she taught herself.

We must admit, even at this moment of exaltation, that she had faults—faults of knowledge, of temper, of social experience. But her errors included none against high feeling. What she endured, what she perceived, she reproduced

with the purest intensity, an intensity which transfers itself to the reader, who admits that he is thrilled, in her own splendid phrase, "to the finest fibre of my being, sir!" To this expression of concentrated emotion she brought a faculty of power in which her work is unique. She has a spell by means of which she holds us enchanted, while she lays before us the distresses and the exasperations of humanity. Her great gift, no doubt, lay in the unconscious courage with which she broke up the stereotyped complacency of the age. Her passion swept over the pools of Early Victorian fiction and roused them to storm; the undulations that it set in motion have been vibrating in our literature ever since, and perhaps the most wonderful fact about Charlotte Brontë is that the emancipation of English fiction from the chains of conventionality should have been brought about, against her own will, by this little provincial Puritan. She was, in her own words, "furnace-tried by pain, stamped by constancy," and out of her fires she rose, a Phœnix of poetic fancy, crude yet without a rival, and now, in spite of all imperfections, to live for ever in the forefront of creative English genius.

EDMUND GOSSE.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË AS A ROMANTIC

By G. K. CHESTERTON

CHARLOTTE BRONTË AS A ROMANTIC

THE genius of Charlotte Brontë is unique in the only valuable sense in which the word can be applied; the only sense which separates the rarity of some gift in a poet from the rarity of some delusion in an asylum. However complex or even grotesque an artistic power may be, it must be as these qualities exist in a key, which is one of the most complex and grotesque of human objects, but which has for its object the opening of doors and the entrance into wider things. Charlotte Brontë's art was something more or less than complex: and it was not to be described as grotesque; except rarely—and unintentionally. But it was temperamental and, like all things depending on temperament, unequal: and it was so personal as to be perverse. It is in connection with power of this kind, however creative, that we have to discover and define what distinguishes it from the uncreative intensity of the insane. I cannot understand what it was that made the Philistines of a former

generation regard *Jane Eyre* as morally unsound; probably it was its almost exaggerated morality. But if they had regarded it as mentally unsound, I could have understood their prejudice, while perceiving the nature of their error. *Jane Eyre* is, among other things, one of the finest detective stories in the world; and for any one artistically attuned to that rather electric atmosphere, the discovery of the mad wife of Rochester is, as that type of artistic sensation should always be, at once startling and suitable. But a stolid reader, trained in a tamer school of fiction, might be excused, I think, if he came to the conclusion that the wife was not very much madder than her husband, and that even the governess herself was a little queer. Such a critic, however, would be ill-taught, as people often are in tame schools; for the mildest school is anything but the most moral. The distinction between the liberating violence that belongs to virtue, as distinct from the merely burrowing and self-burying violence that belongs to vice, is something that can only be conveyed by metaphors; such as that I have used about the key. Some may feel disposed to say that the Brontë spirit was not so much a key as a battering-ram. She had indeed some command of both instruments, and could use the more domestic one quietly enough at times; but the vital point is that they opened the doors. Or it might be said that Jane Eyre and the mad woman lived in

the same dark and rambling house of mystery, but for the maniac all doors opened continually inwards, while for the heroine all doors, one after the other, opened outwards towards the sun.

One of these universal values in the case of Charlotte Brontë is the light she throws on a very fashionable æsthetic fallacy: the over-iterated contrast between realism and romance. They are spoken of as if they were two alternative types of art, and sometimes even as if they were two antagonistic directions of spiritual obligation. But in truth they are things in two different categories; and, like all such things, can exist together, or apart, or in any degree of combination. Romance is a spirit; and as for realism, it is a convention. To say that some literary work is realistic, not romantic, is to be as inconsequent as the man who said to me once (and it is heart-breaking to reflect how many scores of equally inconsequent people have said it), "The Irish are warm-hearted, not logical." He, at any rate, was not logical, or he would have seen that his statement was like saying that somebody was red-haired rather than athletic. There is no kind of reason why a man with strong reasoning power should not have strong affections; and it is my experience, if anything, that the man who can argue clearly in the abstract generally does have a generosity of blood and instincts. But he may not have it;

for the things are in different categories. This case of an error about the Irish has some application to the individual case of Charlotte Brontë, who was Irish by blood, and in a sense, all the more Irish for being brought up in Yorkshire. An Irish friend of mine, who suffers the same exile in the same environment, once made to me the suggestive remark that the towering and over-masculine barbarians and lunatics, who dominate the Brontë novels, simply represent the impression produced by the rather boastful Yorkshire manners upon the more civilized and sensitive Irish temperament. But the wider application is that romance is an atmosphere, as distinct as a separate dimension, which co-exists with and penetrates the whole work of Charlotte Brontë; and is equally present in all her considerable triumphs of realism, and in her even greater triumphs of unreality.

Realism is a convention, as I have said: it is generally a matter of external artistic form, when it is not a matter of mere fashion or convenience, how far the details of life are given, or how far they are the details of the life we know best. It may be rather more difficult to describe a winged horse than a war horse: but after all it is as easy to count feathers as to count hairs; it is as easy and as dull. The story about a hero in which the hairs of his horse were all numbered would not be a story

at all; the line must be drawn a long while before we come to anything like literal reality; and the question of whether we give the horse his wings, or even trouble to mention his colour, is merely a question of the artistic form we have chosen. It is the question between casting a horse in bronze or carving him in marble; not the question between describing a horse for the purposes of a zoologist or for the purposes of a bookie. But the spirit of the work is quite another thing. Works of the wildest fantasticality in form can be filled with a rationalistic and even a sober spirit: as are some of the works of Lucian, of Swift and of Voltaire. On the other hand, descriptions of the most humdrum environments, told with the most homely intimacy, can be shot through and through with the richest intensity, not only of the spirit of sentiment but of the spirit of adventure. Few will be impelled to call the household of Mr. Rochester a humdrum environment; but it is none the less true that Charlotte Brontë can fill the quietest rooms and corners with a psychological romance which is rather a matter of temperature than of time or place. After all, the sympathetic treatment of Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* is not more intrinsically romantic and even exaggerative than the sympathetic treatment of Mr. Paul Emanuel in *Villette*; though the first may be superficially a sort of demon and the

second more in the nature of an imp. To present Mr. Emanuel sympathetically at all was something of an arduous and chivalric adventure. And Charlotte Brontë was chivalric in this perfectly serious sense; perhaps in too serious a sense, for she paid for the red-hot reality of her romance in a certain insufficiency of humour. She was adventurous, but in an intensely individualistic and therefore an intensely womanly way. It is the most feminine thing about her that we can think of her as a knight-errant, but hardly as one of an order or round table of knights-errant. Thackeray said that she reminded him of Joan of Arc. But it is one of the fascinating elements in the long romance of Christendom that figures like Joan of Arc have an existence in romance apart from, and even before, their existence in reality. This vision of the solitary virgin, adventurous and in arms, is very old in European literature and mythology; and the spirit of it went with the little governess along the roads to the dark mansion of madness as if to the castle of an ogre. The same tale had run like a silver thread through the purple tapestries of Ariosto; and we may willingly salute in our great countrywoman, especially amid the greatest epic of our country, something of that nobility which is in the very name of Britomart.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: A PERSONAL SKETCH

By ARTHUR C. BENSON

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: A PERSONAL SKETCH

CHARLOTTE BRONTË was born a century ago, on April 21, 1816; and she died on March 31, 1855. Yet in those short years, years of bleak and hard nurture, much depressing ill-health, tragic sorrow, such as fall to the lot of but few human beings, and with a temperament so highly strung and sensitive that the simplest situations of life overwhelmed her with nervous terrors, she attained an enduring fame, which has increased and broadened every year. But not only that. There are certain figures of undeniable genius, whose work remains as a substantial and venerated contribution to human thought, but whose personality becomes absorbed and folded into the past. On the other hand, there are men and women, the fascination of whose personality and life seems even stronger than that of their books. The smallest details of their career are cherished, and contemporary records are ransacked for traces of their words and acts. This is undeniably the case with

Charlotte Brontë. She was not one of those who put the whole of themselves into their books, leaving their lives silent and featureless. Rather her books were just the natural outcome and expression of her inmost self. The qualities which her deeply seated diffidence prevented her from displaying in daily life, her humour, her penetrating insight, her delicate fancy, her liveliness, her passionate affections, her noble scorn of all that was cold or mean, all these flashed into life on her pages.

When her first great book, *Jane Eyre*, appeared in 1847, it provoked attention and speculation by its daring, its unconventional standards, its realistic sensationalism, and its austere and beautiful rendering of natural scenes. But it was hardly realized at first that it contained more than a novel kind of sentiment, bolder, more natural, more self-revealing than the orthodox and homely pieties of current fiction. It evoked, it is true, both protest and even indignation by a frankness which was confused with indelicacy. But the later books, *Shirley* and *Villette*, less romantic, more restrained, more mature, brought home to their readers that a new philosophy of love, from the woman's point of view, was here resolutely depicted. It was not a revolt against tame and formal conventions so much as a new sense of right and dignity, a manifesto, so to speak, of the equality of noble

love. Compare the conception of love, from the woman's standpoint, in the novels of Dickens and Thackeray, with Charlotte Brontë's conception. In Dickens and Thackeray love is at best a reward, a privilege, graciously tendered and rapturously accepted; and the highest conception of wifely love is one of fidelity and patience and unselfish tendance gently rendered by a domestic angel, whose glory is self-repression, and whose highest praise is to afford an uncritical haven of repose to an undisputed master.

But in Charlotte Brontë's books it is far otherwise. The woman does not look upon marriage as the door of escape from obscurity into activity. Her love is rather a noble surrender, only to be won by a surrender no less noble. Marriage is not submission, but a free and glowing partnership, in which man and woman alike have to do their best, in tenderness and reverence and gratitude, to maintain their love undimmed and ardent. The man is not to decline into a comfortable supremacy surrounded by delicate attentions, with full freedom to indulge his humours. It is rather to be a sacred and impassioned relationship, in which both alike have to do their utmost to keep the mutual ideal of loyalty and duty fresh and pure. Passionate as the affection is which draws Charlotte Brontë's lovers together—was ever the incredible thrill of human contact, the blankness

of separation, the joy of meeting drawn with so bold an outspokenness?—yet there is always present in her love-affairs the germ of a deep and tender friendship, sure to broaden and develop, as the years go on, into a perfect trust and union. Whatever happens, the two are always to be *themselves*, not a faint and sympathetic copy of each other, but strong and independent, linked together in a joyful and grateful service. That is, I believe, the message of Charlotte Brontë's books—the high equality of love.

Let us think for a moment of the background upon which this great and noble creed outlined itself. A bleak and wind-swept vicarage, between the hill-village and the moor. The mother fades early out of life; the father lives in a fiery and impotent seclusion. The children live their own lives, doing much of the house-work, and indulging in endless plays and romances. They go off to school, and two of the delicate creatures fall victims to hard and insanitary conditions. The four who remain are drawn closely together, a brother of amazing brilliance, one sister, Emily, a poetess of high genius, but with a horror of the intrusive world, a younger sister, Anne, of tender if sombre piety, and Charlotte herself. All their little adventures, school-teaching and governess-ships, are poisoned by shyness and home-sickness. But in the sojourn of Charlotte and Emily in Brussels, at a girls' school, where they are half

pupils and half teachers, Charlotte Brontë's heart and mind awake in an unconscious passion for a teacher, M. Heger, a man of insight, mental power, intellectual and moral stimulus. That was really the moulding influence of Charlotte Brontë's genius. It gave her an unrequited devotion, but initiated her into the mystery of love, while it gave her mind its firm and fine maturity. Then the tragedy deepens and thickens; the brother comes to hopeless grief, and saddens the house by his dreary and base excesses. He dies at last, and the other sisters follow him swiftly to the grave. But it was then, in solitude and sorrow, that Charlotte Brontë's mind flowered in her noblest book, *Villette*; and then, too, at last she found her own haven in the deep and wholesome love of a strong, tender and simple man, her father's curate; she knew for once the full delight of being needed, depended upon, and cherished.

But we cannot make a greater mistake than to think of Charlotte Brontë as in any sense a sentimentalist. For all her diffidence and ill-health and her high dreams and visions, she had a nature almost relentlessly strong. There never was anyone with a more unflinching sense of duty. Her judgments of other people are not mild and indulgent. She had a scorn for all that was base and mean and feeble. She made no excuses for herself and she did not excuse weakness in others.

All the practical steps ever taken by the household were planned and executed by her. When she was harshly and insolently criticized, she was not crushed by it; her impulse was to make sharp and spirited reply. She went on with her work without fear or deference; she made no concessions or compromises. She was not meekly religious, accepting sorrow and defeat with mild forbearance. She looked upon life as a probation, a chance of learning great truths and large experiences. She had a certain fear of life, but she looked it firmly in the face, interrogated it, defied it to harm her, laid hands upon its secret. Like Jacob of old, she said to the stern visitant, "I will not let thee go, until thou bless me." She never craved for flight or for repose. She had a sublime faith in God, believing that He had set her in her place to endure, and wrestle, and to say her say, and she knew that He would not allow her to be worsted. It is by this wonderful union of unconquerable courage and passionate tenderness that she has won the affection and worship of so many hearts, the lonely hearts that suffer and would fain be beloved, as well as the strong hearts that recognize in her a gallant comrade in a stern battle. She is the champion of strength in weakness as well as of love in loneliness, and the fame that resounds about her grave is but the echo of gratitude and honour and love.

ARTHUR C. BENSON.

HAWORTH CHURCH.

To face p. 62.

CENTENARY ADDRESS AT HAWORTH

By the RIGHT REV. BISHOP WELLDON

CENTENARY ADDRESS AT HAWORTH[1]

It is with a deeply reverential feeling that I have accepted the privilege of speaking a few words, such as may not, I hope, be altogether unsuitable to the memories which cling around this House of God, in connection with the Centenary year of Charlotte Brontë's birth. She was born, as you know, at Thornton on April 21, 1816. She was baptized in Thornton Church on June 29th of the same year. She died on March 31, 1855. Thus the associations of living men and women with her life are rapidly dying, if they are not now almost dead. For me, the last of them was broken by the death of my friend, Miss Margaret Emily Gaskell, the "Meta" of Charlotte Brontë's letters, in October 1913. So long as Miss Gaskell lived, her house, so well known to the literary and philanthropic world of Manchester, was the abiding link with Charlotte Brontë. For it was there that Charlotte Brontë

[1] Delivered in Haworth Parish Church, June 17, 1916.

stayed on her visits to Manchester; there that, in the stately and rather sombre drawing-room, scarcely altered between her own death and Miss Gaskell's, she hid behind the curtains on the sudden announcement of a strange visitor; there, too, that her biography was written by Mrs. Gaskell. Now, alas! that house in Plymouth Grove is closed, and the citizens of Manchester look back, through an ever lengthening and darkening vista, to the great names of Mrs. Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë.

The year 1816 may be said to unite Charlotte Brontë with the great generation which was born in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century. It was a year memorable in the achievements of literary genius. For in that year—just one hundred years ago—Scott published *The Antiquary*, Byron the third Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and Goethe the first part of his *Italienische Reise*.

No student of Charlotte Brontë's or her sisters' writings would, perhaps, think of placing them, as equals or compeers, in the same class with these three illustrious authors. The sect, or church, of the Brontë-worshippers is comparatively small. But it may be doubted whether any votaries in the history of literature have pursued their cult with more passionate or pathetic feelings than they—shall I not say we?—who gather in spirit, and to-day in

person, around the graves of Charlotte Brontë and so many other members of her family.

If it be asked why our feelings are so deep, as though we were mourning, in Charlotte Brontë especially, not only a writer, however bright she may have shone in the firmament of literature, but a friend in whose life we would, if we might, claim a sympathetic share, no doubt the reason lies, to some extent, in the mystery, I had almost said the tragedy, of the Brontës. Never, it may be, has human genius asserted itself so suddenly and surprisingly as in the three daughters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë. Never has such genius been so suddenly and so ruthlessly extinguished by the Angel of Death. Anne Brontë was twenty-nine years of age at her death, Emily only thirty years, Charlotte, the most famous of all the sisters, only thirty-eight. Two other sisters there were—Elizabeth and Maria—who died, one in the eleventh, and the other in the twelfth, year of her age. Their one brother—the unhappy Branwell—whose gifts were clouded by such errors and failings as cast a shadow upon his whole family, did not live beyond his thirty-first year. Their mother died—"departed to the Saviour" as the inscription upon her grave tells—when her eldest child was only six years old. Their father outlived his whole family, and, after having been "incumbent of Haworth for upward of forty-one years," died

in the eighty-fifth year of his age—more than six years after his daughter Charlotte's death.

It is the thought of genius so prematurely cut off, as men count days and deeds, of Charlotte Brontë's especially, that inspired Matthew Arnold's well-known lines upon Haworth Churchyard.

> Strew with laurel the grave
> Of the early dying! Alas!
> Early she goes on the path
> To the silent country, and leaves
> Half her laurels unwon,
> Dying too soon! Yet green
> Laurels she had, and a course
> Short, but redoubled by fame.

For of Charlotte Brontë it was true—if I may quote the sacred words—that she "being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time." "We live in deeds, not years," says the author of *Festus*, whose own centenary year coincides with hers; he was born, I think, only one day after her.

> We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
> In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
> We should count time by heart-throbs; he most lives
> Who thinks most, feels the noblest, and acts the best.

Yet was there ever a home which might have seemed to be so improbable a birth-place of

literary works destined to affect the mind and the heart of the English-speaking world, as the Parsonage of Haworth? When I was thinking of my address, I could not but recall the confession of him who was "no prophet, neither a prophet's son," but only "an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit"; yet the Lord took him, "as he followed the flock," and bade him "Go, prophesy unto My people Israel." It is always, or often, in the most unlikely places that human genius lifts its head. The three hundred years which have elapsed since Shakespeare's death, if they have at all drawn aside the veil which has happily saved him from much desecrating criticism, have only accentuated the contrast between his parentage, his domestic life, his local and social environments and himself. There can be no more fatal mistake on earth than the prejudice, whether local or personal, which lies in the question, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" For out of Nazareth came the Highest and the Holiest of the children of men, and the lesson of His birth illumines and ennobles the possibilities of every town and every age all the world over.

Still, it is possible that the history of human literature affords no parallel to the life of the Brontës at Haworth Parsonage. The family lived in their little home, cut off not only, at all

times, from the great world, but for many weeks or months from the neighbouring towns like Leeds or Bradford, and even from Keighley. They enjoyed few opportunities, if indeed any, of social and intellectual culture. They saw no friends, or hardly any; and until the name of Brontë became famous, the arrival of a passing visitor was itself an event. Their daily walks took them across the bleak moors. It was, as Charlotte Brontë herself said, "only the brief flower-flush of August on the heather, or the rare sunset-smile of June," which came as a relief from the ever-present gloom of the moorland. Below their home, as you see to-day, stood the church, with the churchyard, which was possibly the source of their frequent illnesses, lying in part above it. The father of the three sisters and their wayward brother was a recluse. How much of their literary genius they owed to him it is difficult to say. He too was, although he is not generally known to have been, an author, and a poet; but in his *Cottage Poems* there is not perhaps a single stanza worth preserving. Even if Mrs. Gaskell's stories of his eccentricity, as shown by his habit of carrying a loaded pistol with him by day and laying it on his dressing-table at night, are discarded, yet he was an invalid, generally living, and even taking his meals, by himself; and never dreaming of all that was going on, when he had retired to bed, in the

little schoolroom of his house. Yet the story of the way in which Charlotte Brontë revealed to him the publication of *Jane Eyre* does not forbid the thought of a tender sympathy between father and daughter. The mother died, as I have said, when all her children were young. The aunt who took, or tried to take, the mother's place was always pretty well a stranger to her nephew and nieces, and she spent the last years of her life very much in her own room. Nothing could well exceed the loneliness of their days. Nor was it sensibly relieved by the experiences they gained, whether as pupils, or as teachers, in schools, or in M. Heger's Pensionnat at Brussels. There is a world of meaning in the note which Charlotte Brontë appended to her sister Anne's poem, "Lines Written from Home," when she said, "My sister Anne had to taste the cup of life as it is mixed for the class termed 'Governesses.'" It has been sometimes held that Mrs. Gaskell's well-known *Life of Charlotte Brontë* conveys an overdrawn impression of deep sadness. I do not think that criticism will be passed by any one who has read the *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell*, or even the later poems of the three sisters; for unless I am wrong, there is among them all one poem, and one only, which is not tinged by the sombre hue of melancholy. But what faith, what courage was theirs! It was little

that they suffered the disappointment of seeing their early manuscripts tossed from publisher to publisher. That has been the fate of most, or of many, authors who have attained celebrity in letters. It is difficult indeed to escape the feeling of astonishment at the blindness of so many publishers to the writings of unknown genius. Few however can be the writers who, some time after the publication of their book, have learnt that the copies of it which have been sold were only two. It was, as is well known, on the very day when Charlotte Brontë knew the rejection of *The Professor*, the day too when she was nursing her father after the operation upon his eyes at Manchester, that she began the writing of *Jane Eyre*.

I am not called to pass a literary judgment upon the three sisters, or upon Charlotte, the most famous of them, to-day. That would be the office of another place and another time than this. All that you will ask of me is some brief estimate of the part which religion plays in the circumstances of her life. It is, of course, true that she was spiritually the child of the Church of England and of a clerical home within that Church. She and her sisters are striking figures in the long gallery of the men and women distinguished, not only in letters but in all aspects of public life, who have been born and bred in the parsonages and

A. B. NICHOLLS.
From a photograph taken about 1861.

To face p. 72.

manses of England, Scotland, and Wales. Her loyalty to her Church was one source of her unhappiness in the strictly Roman Catholic school to which she was sent at Brussels. She was the daughter of a clergyman, she was the wife of a clergyman. It does not seem that, from first to last, any doubt of Christianity or of her own national Church fell as a cloud upon her sensitive spirit. If she was happy anywhere, she was happy in her religion.

God gave her her genius, and she acknowledged it as His gift. Many blessings there are which are born of inheritance or environment or education; but the greatest of gifts, such as beauty or genius, God keeps in His own hands. Charlotte Brontë cannot well have written seriously when she told her lifelong friend, Ellen Nussey, that the text which she quoted in one of her letters, "The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth," was, she believed, Scripture, though in what chapter or book, or whether it was correctly quoted, she could not possibly say. Whether she knew it or not, it was true of her family and herself.

Every one who has read the story of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters is aware how much they owed, in their writings, to the events and experiences of their own lives. Few lives

indeed, so strangely limited as theirs, can have afforded so much material for literature. *The Professor*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and even *Jane Eyre* in its central motive, were inspired by circumstances of her own life, or circumstances which had come to be known to her in her life. It is a curious tribute to the vivid effect of her portraiture that she was criticized for inaccuracy in some details of her characters, as though she had meant her characters to be actual photographs of real men and women. But genius is nowhere more clearly seen than in the use which it makes of such incidents as common humanity passes by.

If Charlotte Brontë owed much to her own life, most of all did she owe to its sadness. A few months of peace God granted her at the last, but the rest was silent tragedy. So great a poet as Shelley has said that

> . . . most wretched men,
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong,
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

Charlotte Brontë was not embittered by the pains, the losses, and the disappointments of her life. They only quickened her insight and her sympathy. But it may well be doubted if she could have written her books with such pathetic intensity, if she had not passed through the deep waters of affliction.

She was no prophet, nor was she, in any literary sense, a prophet's daughter, but the Lord took her as she followed the flock, and He bade her "Go, prophesy unto My people." The charge of irreligion or immorality in her writings may fall from her, I think, unanswered and unheeded, because it is wholly undeserved. Very touching are the poems of the three sisters in their religious character. Emily was, I believe, the truest poet, and the last lines which she ever wrote were quoted not long ago by a high living authority for their sublime expression of an almost pantheistic faith in God.

> Though earth and men were gone,
> And suns and universes ceased to be,
> And Thou wert left alone,
> Every existence would exist in Thee.
> There is no room for death,
> Nor atom that his might could render void:
> Thou—Thou art being and breath,
> And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

But more touching are the last lines of Anne Brontë, who so soon followed her sister Emily to the grave, the lines which have just been sung in this service. For they were written upon her deathbed, and as her sister Charlotte said, "These lines written, the desk was closed, the pen laid aside for ever."

If Thou shouldst bring me back to life,
More humbled I should be;
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
More apt to lean on Thee.
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow;
But, Lord, whatever be my fate,
O let me serve Thee now!

This is the inmost spirit of Charlotte Brontë also. It was understood by the wisest of her contemporaries. I know not if all her admirers, who listen to me now, are acquainted with an article which Thackeray, her own literary hero, wrote in the *Cornhill Magazine* of April, 1860, under the title "The Last Sketch," as an introduction to the fragment, which she left behind her at her death, of a new novel to be called *Emma*. It is worth reading, worth remembering too; for he speaks in it of his own brief personal intercourse with her, and of the impression which she left upon his memory. "A great and holy reverence of right and truth," he says, "seemed to be with her always."

It will be well perhaps, in this Centenary year since her birth, to take leave of her with these words of one whom she so greatly admired. She dedicated to him, as you know, the second edition of *Jane Eyre*. His appreciation of her literary work she valued, I think, above all other rewards.

Yet, we cannot take leave of her, above all in the village where she lived and died, and in this holy place where she often worshipped, without asking what her feelings would be if she were living now in the agony of an almost world-wide war. Certainly she would have felt for the great soldier, whose death has saddened of late the whole British Empire, something of the admiration which she lavished upon the Duke of Wellington. Certainly she would have honoured the gallant seamen and soldiers who have died for their country and their Empire in the spirit of these lines of hers—not generally known—which I am courteously permitted to quote.

> Weep for the Dying Martyr, weep.
> And the soldier, laid on the battle-plain
> Alone at the close of night, alone.
> The passing off of some warlike-strain
> Blent with his latest moan;
> His thoughts all for his fatherland,
> His feeble heart, his unnerved hand
> Still quiveringly upraised to wield
> Once more his bright sword on the field,
> While wakes his fainting energy
> To gain her yet one victory;
> As he lies bleeding cold and low,
> As life's red tide is ebbing slow,
> Lament for fallen bravery.

For, alas! the world seems to have become all a house of mourning. The stain of blood-

shed is seen everywhere, except, methinks, upon the lintels of the houses when the Angel of Death passes by. Yet there is comfort, if there is sorrow, in the retrospect of one hundred years. When Charlotte Brontë was born, the victory of Waterloo had just been won. But it would be a historical error to think of that victory as at once inaugurating an era of national peace and prosperity. It was in 1816 that the Luddite agitation assumed its most threatening character. She has herself told the story of it in *Shirley*. All over England the evils of scarcity resulting from a bad harvest, of distress in the manufacturing area, of commercial bankruptcy, of unemployment, of discontent, and of frequent rioting, were felt to be portents of a coming revolution. They pointed the way to great social and political reforms, of which she herself lived to be the witness—such as the Reform Act, Roman Catholic Emancipation, and the Abolition of the Corn Laws. But there are some endowments of human life which rise above all social vicissitudes. One of these is literature; another, I think, is religion. Charlotte Brontë, amidst the troubles of her time, pursued her way undeviatingly to her appointed goal. She gave herself to literature and to love. Few among men and women can there have been who have done less to stain the chrisoms of their baptism than she. Yet like the saints, of whom the

anthem appointed for this memorial service tells, she had "come out of great tribulation," she had "washed her robe and made it white in the blood of the Lamb." "Therefore are they"—and she, as we humbly believe—"before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

J. E. C. WELLDON.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN BRUSSELS

By M. H. SPIELMANN

CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN BRUSSELS

During the Charlotte Brontë Centenary week this Paper was published in The Times Literary Supplement (13 *April* 1916), *and is here republished, by permission, with numerous emendations and additions.*

I

FEW novelists have been so much the outcome of their surroundings as Charlotte Brontë; few have been more autobiographical under cover of fiction, few have depended more for their *mise-en-scène*, down to veriest details and microscopic touches, on the localities adopted as the background of their plots. Wherefore the game of localizing places, streets, and houses mentioned in her books, as also of identifying, *tant bien que mal*, the personages of her stories, has been played with rare enjoyment by an ever-increasing body of enthusiasts. The sport has become a cult, and Brontë literature is fast swelling into a library of respectable dimensions.

Even the most zealous of the explorers must be aware that whether Miss Brontë meant to reproduce this place or that with absolute fidelity, or whether she was only fashioning the characteristics of her backgrounds into a

sufficiently convincing "set," is a matter of minor interest and of minimum literary importance. But the spot in which so many fruitful months of her life were passed—inasmuch as they laid their impress so unmistakably upon her art and upon her character and her life's happiness, tearing her heart and awakening her soul, as appears again and again in her human comedy, vivifying some of her most poignant scenes and prompting her most trenchant utterances—this stands in a different category. Of this pregnant spot, this sheltered nook, we have had descriptions in *The Professor* and in *Villette*, in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life*, and in the books of Mr. Clement Shorter, Mrs. Chadwick, Mrs. Macdonald, Mr. Wroot, and others, and we have seen photographs of the exterior of the school and of the ancient garden it embraced. But the whole budget explains but incompletely the surroundings wherein were played out the little life dramas of Paul Emanuel and Lucy Snowe, of William Crimsworth and Frances Henri, and at least one palpitating scene of Charlotte Brontë's own experience, in the matter of the half unwitting and wholly unresponsive Professor Constantin Heger.

For that reason, a few months before the War broke out, I presumed on friendship to beg Mademoiselle Louise Heger to draw for me a plan of the school-house and the surrounding

premises where a great part of her life had been passed, with all the accuracy which her cultivated artist-memory would permit. Her suggestive sketch, the result of gracious compliance, forms the basis of the map which—with certain obvious errors in scale and numerous details added—was duly drawn and printed, illustrating main buildings, routes, and points of interest connected with the novels and with the author herself. Readers may therefore realize henceforward with greater ease the Brontë theatre and the stage, and the exits and the entrances of the players. Mademoiselle Heger, it will be remembered, was the little Georgette of *Villette*; she loved Charlotte Brontë as the story-child loved Lucy Snowe with a love that was returned; and she still bears Miss Brontë's face and figure clearly imprinted on her memory.

Hither, in 1842, the Rev. Patrick Brontë brought his daughters Charlotte and Emily, and left the young women, soberly and earnestly hopeful, in the charge of the motherly Madame Heger and her mercurial husband; and hither, a year later, worn out by a trying journey in foul weather, Charlotte returned alone, drawn by an irresistible attraction to continue her schemed-out studies and to pursue her teaching.

When the weary traveller arrived in the Rue d'Isabelle she reached the nursery of her genius. Cradle assuredly it was not. Her genius had

long since quickened in Haworth, tended by her father in her earliest years. In Brussels it was trained, developed, nurtured, and directed by M. Heger, but inspired at least as much by her own thought and suffering as by her master's care. It would have blossomed in any case; yet but for him—apart from that Romance which the poor girl's letters so touchingly and so beautifully revealed—it assuredly would have blossomed into a different flower, a bloom of another growth, less cultivated, perhaps less vivid in colour, less rich, less sweet, and less pungent in its perfume. The Charlotte Brontë we know and honour, whose faculty was forced into the particular luxuriance by which it is recognized through her experiences in the Pensionnat, was, greatly in her art and to some degree in her emotion, the product of the Rue d'Isabelle.

In *Villette*, then, Miss Brontë pictures Lucy Snowe's arrival in Brussels much as it occurred to herself on her second visit. Now let us follow her, step by step—for the first time—to her predestined home. "Having left behind us the miry Chaussée"—that is to say, the Chaussée de Gand—the diligence rattled over the pavement, passed through the Porte de Flandre, and stopped at the bureau. Hence Dr. John Bretton courteously conducted Miss Snowe along the boulevards, on foot, through darkness, fog, and rain, past the Allée Verte—at that time

almost a civic pleasaunce, referred to in *The Professor*, but now an arid waste of sand and stone, a mere eastern quay to the Canal de Willebroeck—until by the Rue Ducale or the Rue de la Loi the north-east gate of the Park was reached, and the park "crossed" to an opening into the Rue Royale opposite the Montagne du Parc, which descends to the Lower Town. Here her guide left her, after having instructed her how to reach a decent inn by descending the Belliard steps.

It has been supposed that this would in reality have been too long a walk; but in the author's eyes it must have been a mere ramble, for in *The Professor* the newly affianced Crimsworth and Frances Henri celebrate their engagement by making "a tour of the city by the Boulevards"—a jaunt of twice the distance which tired the lady but "a little."

Lucy's progress from this point to the Pensionnat has created some difficulty in readers' minds, yet it is clear enough. Misunderstanding her instructions, she missed the Belliard steps [1] to the Rue d'Isabelle, wherein, at its junction with the Rue des Douze Apôtres and the Rue de la Chancellerie was supposed to stand the inn of

[1] The opening in the Rue Royale would not reveal to the passer-by, particularly at night-time, the existence of the Belliard steps, because the head of the stairway is masked by the pedestal of the General's statue.

which she was in search, and wandered straight on along "the magnificent street and square"—no other than the Rue and the Place Royale—passed the great church (St. Jacques sur Caudenberg) until, turning along the south side, she was dismayed by being accosted by "two moustachioed men who came suddenly from behind the pillars." What pillars were these?

The truth is that at the time when Miss Brontë was in Brussels, as is shown by contemporary maps, the Rue de la Régence had not yet pierced the side of the square; the Place was still shut in, and in the middle of it was a narrow way flanked with pillars known as the Passage des Colonnes. It was from this sinister recess that the rascals emerged and talked to the frightened young woman while keeping pace with her. They were moustachioed villains—a delightfully feminine touch, reminding us of those Early Victorian days when moustaches and beard were damning attributes, concrete symbols of the depravity natural to a foreigner, and rarely, save in a few deplorable instances, affected by any but the most hardened Englishmen.[1]

[1] It may be recalled how, in the 'Forties, the editor of the *Art Journal*, shocked and incredulous, declined to accept as wholly true a newspaper report to the effect that *an artist*, "wearing a moustache," had been arrested for some minor misdemeanour at Canterbury and had claimed to be an Englishman! The outraged editor, Mr. Samuel Carter Hall,

What wonder, then, that these two men, with "faces looking out of the forest of hair, moustache, and whisker," afterwards turned out to be the very same two evil-minded dandy professors of the college, MM. Rochemort and Boissec [shockingly significant names — thoroughly appropriate to the hateful bearers of them], who basely doubted to Monsieur Paul the genuineness of Lucy Snowe's *devoir*.

She fled—darting either along the Rue du Musée and so on down the Rue Ravenstein, or by the Montagne de la Cour and the Rue Ravenstein, or the Rue Villa Hermosa. In any case she descended the steps in which terminates either of these parallel lanes—mistaking them for the Belliard steps—and found herself in the Rue Terarken. Following the street to the right she walked on into the "Rue Fossette" (the Rue d'Isabelle), and fetched up at the Pensionnat of Madame Beck opposite the foot of the Belliard stairway. Before this house stood the faltering Lucy Snowe. All idea of an inn, thanks to directing if exhausting fate, had been renounced, forgotten; she pleaded for admittance, and by good fortune found it. Her real life in Villette was begun.

These same Belliard steps, it will be remembered, attracted young William Crimsworth in

refused to believe that an Englishman and an artist would so debase himself as to appear in public "in the character of a French poodle."

The Professor. From the Rue Royale, opposite the spot occupied in the seventeenth century by the Domus Isabellæ—by the Sovereign after whom the street below was called—he "contemplated the statue of General Belliard" (due to the chisel of one of the brothers Geefs and set up very shortly before Charlotte Brontë's arrival) "and then I advanced to the top of the great staircase beyond, and I looked down into a narrow back street, which I afterwards learned was called the Rue d'Isabelle. I well recollect that my eye rested on the green door of a rather large house opposite, where, on a brass plate, was inscribed, 'Pensionnat de Demoiselles.'" It is natural that one endowed with such excellent gift of vision should have described so accurately the locality in which he was to play an important rôle.

Thus by her talent Miss Brontë transmogrifies and develops into a dramatic incident her calm arrival in Villette. Is it certain, by the way, that this felicitous rechristening of Brussels was from the first the author's intention? We know how she changed names which she had originally adopted and bettered them by that change. We know how "The Master" became "The Professor"; and how "Lucy Snowe" was temporarily altered into the equally "cold name" of "Lucy Frost," and then turned back again. "I should like the alteration to be made now

throughout the MS.," she wrote to Mr. Williams at her publishers'. Was it perhaps a similar after-thought that caused her to adopt "Villette" in preference to a first idea of "Choseville"? "The carriage-wheels made a tremendous rattle over the flinty Choseville pavement," she says in chapter twenty-seven, retaining, perhaps by an oversight, the uncorrected name, when Lucy Snowe brings Ginevra Fanshawe back to the school and administers "a sound moral drubbing" on the way. We remember that this same flighty Ginevra when asked some months before at what place she is going to stay, had replied, "Oh! at —*chose*." "'*Chose*,' however, I found in this instance, stood for Villette," says Lucy. The germ of the idea may perhaps be here, revealing the fallible hand of the careless retoucher. But, unless I am mistaken, Charlotte Brontë was not the first writer to use the name "Villette."

The aspect of the Rue d'Isabelle, now, alas, demolished, is well known, with its school-houses, its loftier dwelling-house of the Directress, and beyond the row of eight cottages which, in the seventeenth century, housed members of the aristocratic Guild of Crossbowmen, and which now were owned by the circumspect Madame Heger lest they should be occupied by undesirable neighbours. At the farthest end of their property was a Porte Monumentale built by the Infanta Isabella as a gateway to the Arba-

létriers' practice-ground, but dismantled in 1910 and removed by the Brussels municipality for re-erection at some future time in the Museum. Within stood the old Galerie, with its dated sixteenth-century fire-back, used as a place of recreation by Madame and the pupils. All these faced the Rue d'Isabelle—called by Miss Brontë the Rue Fossette, after the Fossé aux Chiens which in more ancient days occupied the spot.[1]

II

Facing the Belliard steps, then, was the main doorway of the Directress's house, from the lofty roof of which Monsieur Heger, when a youth taking his share in the struggle in which Belgium won her independence—a strange four days' battle during which the combatants amiably adjourned for refreshments—fired into the park. This was in 1830, before he knew the lady who six years later was to become his wife. To the right extended the school buildings—three sides of a square, with the addition of a cross "galerie" or corridor which formed a quad, or "cour." Opposite the windows of the private house was the Première Classe—the classroom

[1] It should be remembered that when the road was constructed in order that the Archduchess might have a direct private way from the Court to Ste. Gudule, it opened into the space now occupied by the Place Royale.

of the highest form—the southern doors of which led straight out into the "Grand Berceau," and the narrow continuation called the "Allée Défendue,"[1] skirting the long parapet wall that rose above the retaining wall of the Athénée playing-ground many feet below.[2] This is the wall which Ginevra's elegant and dapper lover, the resourceful Comte Alfred de Hamal, would scale in order to reach the great acacia-tree. This tree "shadowed the Grand Berceau and rested some of its branches on the roof of the first classe." By climbing this, too, he reached the "Grande Salle," and eventually the arms of the girl he wooed, first assuming for precaution's sake the habit of the terrible Dryad, the ghostly Nun. It may well be believed that the tree-climbing performance was founded upon a true incident, for use has been made of it by both sisters—by Charlotte here in *Villette*, and by Emily in *Wuthering Heights*, when Catherine, whom the maniacal Heathcliff was keeping prisoner, effected her escape. "Luckily, lighting on her mother's [chamber], she got easily out of its lattice, and on to the ground, by means

[1] "Through the glass door [of the Première Classe] and the arching berceau, I commanded the deep vista of the Allée Défendue" (*Villette*, chap. xxxvi).

[2] Cf. the reference in *The Professor* to "a bare gravelled court, with an enormous *pas de géant* in the middle, and the monotonous walls and windows of a boys' school-house round" (chap. vii).

of the fir-tree close by." It is unlikely that either sister would have plagiarized from the other, but a circumstance known to both could by both be used.

In the great arbour, "vast and vine-draped," known as the Grand Berceau, Mme. Beck would teach on summer afternoons; Lucy, too, would hold her class, and Monsieur Paul would do his gardening. Miss Brontë's taste was for the greater privacy of the Allée Défendue, the secluded branch-tunnelled alley forbidden to pupils because its low wall flanked the Athénée boys' playground some fifteen or twenty feet below. She found it a charming retreat for contemplation, and it is the scene of many an incident alike in *Villette* and *The Professor*. At its southern extremity Charlotte places the aged, half-dead pear-tree—the mighty patriarch "Methuselah" that stood sentinel over the nun's torture-grave (as the author invented it). In the hole at its root Lucy Snowe buried her treasured letters from Dr. Bretton, and returned to it to mourn her sad awakening, when she was joined by Monsieur Paul in poignant interview, and with him witnessed yet again the passing of the Nun. It was here, too, that the casket was dropped which Dr. Bretton rushed in to reclaim, thrown from a window of which more must presently be said; and it was from here that the love passage between M. Pelet and Mlle.

Reuter rose to the ears of Crimsworth seated at the lattice above.

Below in this wall,[1] and at its foot, may still be seen—for the destruction of this neighbourhood is not yet so complete as has been represented—two doorways entered from the level of the Athénée courtyard and playground below. That nearest to "Methuselah" may be identified with the door of communication through which, declared Monsieur Paul to Lucy Snowe, he made secret entrance from the college to the Pensionnat by way of the tool-shed in the upper garden—the same tool-shed whence Lucy brought slate and mortar to set by way of tombstone on her letters' grave. [2]

[1] The parapet remains, with the coping-stones clamped on, in consequence of their having once been shifted through the hurricane violence of a storm such as Lucy Snowe describes.

[2] In my Notes on the Brontë-Heger letters published in *The Times* I made the suggestion that the burying of the Bretton letters as described with such realistic detail by Lucy Snowe might have been inspired by Miss Brontë having similarly treated Professor C. Heger's letters at Haworth. Thereupon Mr. Percy A. Fielding wrote to *The Times* to point out that he had made the like suggestion to the Brontë Society a few months before, and drew attention to the fact that in her letters of June 15 and July 30, 1850, "there is a reference to certain re-roofing operations that were taking place at Haworth Parsonage, and from this one may suppose that both slates and material for mortar were being used on the premises." It has, I believe, been

Miss Brontë's descriptions of the garden are remarkable in their fidelity to fact, and alleys and plantations all aid the development of the story. Chief of all is that "alley bordered by enormous old fruit trees down the middle," many times alluded to, in blossom and in fruit. These trees, says Mrs. Gaskell, formed part of the orchard that had stood here even before the crossbowmen's day. Ancient pear-trees they were, famed far beyond the borders of Belgium, and visited by fructiculturists from all parts by reason of their marvellous qualities. They yielded a rich seasonal harvest that was stored in cellars extending below the Belliard steps; and for months in each year they regaled the inhabitants of the school, who numbered not fewer than one hundred and thirty persons at the time when "little Georgette" had grown to be fruit-keeper and visited the cellars with her father to select and fetch the accustomed dessert.

III

Here we must introduce a new personage, a new "original," to Brontë readers and Brontë students. This is no other than Monsieur Pelet, a leading character in *The Professor*. This

shown that no such opportunity for letter-burying—so far as a tree is concerned—ever offered itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the Parsonage. But the moors?

character seems to have puzzled every commentator. One of them awards him the title-rôle in the book. Some see in him a distorted portrait of M. Heger, or at least an individual based upon his personality. Others declare his school "without disguise, the Athénée" or else place it in the Rue d'Isabelle. Others, again, pronounce M. Pelet, this Fenchman, a figment of the author's brain, and write him down in consequence "unconvincing," and a comparative failure, as might be expected in a figure not inspired by the life. Every one of these conjectures is incorrect. Mrs. Humphry Ward came nearest to the truth when she recognized reality in the portrait, and applauded it as "an extremely clever sketch." It is strange, indeed, that the existence of M. Pelet's school should have remained unsuspected among the students who have examined Miss Brontë's works under the literary microscope, for the bell-ringing incident related farther on affords the necessary clue.

As a matter of fact, M. Pelet was not only drawn from life—he was depicted with startling veracity so far as externals are concerned; and I am assured by those who knew him that no character in the Brussels chapters of the two books has been presented with greater truth as to appearance and style. M. Pelet was no other than Monsieur Lebel, who is still remembered

with respect in Brussels, where he long resided, and who towards the end, I believe, returned to France. He was the French refugee schoolmaster, the man distinguished in air, quiet in method, Parisian in characteristics, suave and silky in manner. Parisian, indeed, to the finger tips, almost elegant in his easy assumption of superiority which others were made to feel—he was exactly as Charlotte Brontë has presented him.

M. Lebel's school-house for boys stood on the north side of the Rue Terarken, beside some of the Athénée buildings. The back of it, partly veiled by tall shrubs, was pierced by a single casement in a lower storey, whence, after it had been unboarded, Crimsworth, now one of M. Pelet's teachers (and before he had developed into a professor at the Athénée itself), looked into the garden of the Pensionnat,[1] and whence, too, M. Paul Emanuel, cynical psychologist as he was, instructed by the Jesuit priest, the Père Silas, watched his girl pupils at play and at quarrel, and probed the phenomena of feminine character in their persons and in the persons, too, of the several mistresses, even of the Directress herself: for which purpose, indeed, he had hired it. If Miss Brontë brings out this point, is it not to show that the building

[1] "I shall now at last see the mysterious garden: I shall gaze both on the angels and their Eden" (*The Professor*, chap. viii).

could not have belonged to the Athénée, otherwise the leading professor of that Royal college would have taken possession of this post of observation as by right of privilege and not of leasehold? It was, as we are told in *Villette*, merely a "boarding-house of the neighbouring college, and not the Athénée itself." From an "attic loophole high up, opening from the sleeping-room" of a servant, there dropped the casket intended for Ginevra but delivered by fate into the hands of Lucy Snowe.

M. Lebel does not reappear in *Villette*. The author had used him up in her earlier picture of Brussels life. She had done with him and he had no part in the new drama of which M. Paul was the hero; there was no room for two college directors here.

IV

To the west of the Pensionnat of the Rue d'Isabelle stood the Athénée Royale, on a level considerably lower. Its buildings, especially at their northern extremity, came in contact with the Heger School, but the only material and social link between the two establishments was the common well, still to be seen ruined and uncovered. Indeed, laid waste though the site now is—for the Athénée has long since been removed to the Rue du Chêne and its old

buildings have been razed—almost unrecognizable as is the quarter by reason of wholesale demolition and vast roadway construction, we can at this very moment trace a good many of the old landmarks. In the retaining-wall there still remain the two large niches which accommodated the Professor on his *estrade*—one at each end. One of these is beside the old well, to the north of it; the other is where, at the southern extremity, we recognize the site of a demolished class-room.

Such was the island of garden and buildings which daily met the eyes of Charlotte Brontë as the reflective, contemplative English girl trod the paths or took refuge for *recueillement* in her small *berceau* or in the *allée défendue*. It was here that she evolved her thoughts and meditations: in the classroom she learned how to form, to order, and to express them. It was truly the nursery of her genius, where she was taught that nothing is too insignificant for treatment in literary expression. Thus the natural acuteness of her observation was sharpened; she missed little or nothing; she acquired the power of taking literary advantage of even the most trivial incidents and utilizing them with curious effect.

Here are two examples, which will be new to the reader, still spoken of in the Heger and the Errera families.

At the corner of the Rue Royale and the opening to the Belliard steps stands the splendid mansion formerly occupied by the well-known banker, M. Errera, now belonging to his widow. It is noteworthy enough in its exterior aspect, but exceptionally beautiful within, exquisitely designed, and famous for its occupation by the Napoleonic chief during the French ascendancy in Brussels. The basement of it was on a level with an upper floor of the Pensionnat Heger and separated from it but by the width of the street and the houses on its hither side. In this basement during the absence of the family one of the footmen would frequently exercise his exceptional talent on the French horn. This trivial circumstance, always remembered in the Heger household, was utilized by Miss Brontë with much effect in *The Professor*, without, of course, revealing its very domestic source :—"Here a strain of music stole in upon my monologue," says Crimsworth, "and suspended it ; it was a bugle, very skilfully played, in the neighbourhood of the park, I thought, or on the Place Royale. . . . The strain retreated, its sound waxed fainter and fainter, and was soon gone ; my ear prepared to repose on the absolute hush of midnight once more." And when he listened again it was the love-talk of Mlle. Reuter and M. Pelet of which he was the unwilling auditor.

The bell-ringing incident, again, as has already been said, has its importance:—

At the conclusion of Crimsworth's first lesson at Mlle. Reuter's *pensionnat*, "a bell clanging out in the yard announced the moment for the cessation of school labours. I heard our own bell at the same time, and that of a certain public college immediately after"; that is to say, the first bell sounded was at Mlle. Reuter's in the Rue d'Isabelle; the second was at M. Pelet's, where Crimsworth was in residence; and the third at the Athénée Royale—the usual order. Later on, the incipient flirtation between Mlle. Reuter and her young English professor Crimsworth is broken short by the dinner-bell which rang out "both at her house and M. Pelet's."

V

Beyond these immediate confines we may note the historic Maison Ravenstein; next, the former Court Chapel hard by the entrance to the present Musée Moderne,[1] where Crimsworth sought for his lost Frances Henri; the Palais des Académies, which seems to be indicated as the scene of the Athénée prize-giving, where the little finale of

[1] Here are held the Art Exhibitions which Lucy Snowe criticized with such clear and just perception. Her views on art were marked by freedom and sanity unusual in Early Victorian days, especially in the provinces.

M. Paul's "*qu'en dites-vous?*" to Lucy Snowe after his lecture is a little maliciously adapted from Thackeray's similar question to Miss Brontë after his own address. And in the Rue Royale stood the old Hôtel Mengelle (formerly a great apartment-house and now rebuilt into a modern hotel of the smartest and most elegant order) which Brontë critics by common consent aver is identical with a house of importance in the story —the Hôtel Crécy of the Rue Crécy.

In this view, when all the circumstances are taken into account, it is impossible to acquiesce.

Those who have been familiar with the old Hôtel Mengelle, and who retain a clear recollection of its construction, its general aspect and architecture, cannot, surely, recognize in it "the sumptuous Hôtel Crécy," where lived the little Countess Paulina de Bassompierre with her father, even though every allowance be made for some decline from pristine splendour. When Ginevra Fanshawe elopes with the Comte de Hamal and their carriage dashes northwards (as is demonstrable) along the Rue des Douze Apôtres, we are told that "neither the Hôtel Crécy nor the Château de la Terrasse lies in that direction." This could not be said of the Hôtel Mengelle in the Rue Royale. Moreover, we are told as well of a Boulevard de Crécy *with its Carmelite convent*, and of a Porte de Crécy, all details of matter-of-fact topography. Where, then, are

these? What is there to correspond with them? The answer is clear, and should, I think, be final.

The in-dwellers of Brussels will tell you—what Charlotte Brontë practically tells us herself—that the most probable solution of the puzzle (a solution to satisfy every point raised) is to be found not in the Rue Royale at all, but in the Boulevard de Waterloo with its occasional fine houses, its Petits Carmes convent and its Église des Carmes, the Porte de Hal, and, opposite to it, the Chaussée de Waterloo, which led towards the picturesque outskirts a mile and more away that might well provide the *locale* of the Brettons' home, "La Terrasse." Here, then, you have the Boulevard, the town gate, the Carmelite convent, and the direction all as indicated. Moreover, in the Rue Crécy Lucy Snowe takes her German lessons. Would honest Fräulein Anna Braun have found lodgment in the "palatial" Rue Royale? And to reach it would Lucy and Paulina have taken the "nearest way" by the Place Royale and entered the park? The reiteration of the name should be some indication. What is more important is the close connexion of idea between the two epoch-making victories, Crécy and Waterloo. Mrs. Gaskell tells us that Charlotte "worshipped the Duke of Wellington," that the Duke "had been her hero from childhood."

Her admirable *devoir*, "Sur la mort de Napoléon," we remember, contained a passionate yet reasoned eulogy on the victor at the expense of the fallen Emperor. Charlotte Brontë's relative silence on the subject, alike in her letters and in her novels, has been the subject of remark ; here, at least, is reason to believe that she had Waterloo in her mind—she who had lived so long close to the battlefield where the struggle was fought out the year before she was born—but was debarred by her scheme of pseudonymity from mentioning it by name. So Crécy became an irreproachable substitute, offering a mystery not too obscure for solution. At the time when *Villette* was being written the Duke was sinking, and died in September 1852 : the event may likely enough have given a turn to the author's thoughts and influenced her choice of venue. Surely, as to the identity of the Boulevard de Waterloo, the Carmelite convent should settle the matter definitely.

Within the space of a few hundred square yards, with her mind's eye manifestly fixed upon a map such as has since been devised and published, Miss Brontë could depict a scene as brilliant and varied as that of the Patriotic Fête in the park and build up one of the most important and significant chapters in the book, all the while accounting to herself for every step taken by the narrator. By the Rue Terarken, up the steps of the Rue Villa Hermosa, across

the Place Royale walks Lucy Snowe, and, passing through the gate opposite the Hôtel Bellevue (the frontage of the hostelry pitted with bullet-holes), she enters the park—then and for some years later surrounded by a mere palisade and not by its present imposing iron railing. Her passage from spot to spot is described too clearly to be mistaken. She seeks to wend her way to one of the two "stone basins," with its clear green water—probably the one nearer to the Royal Palace; and she is here recognized by M. Miret—a genuine character, by the way, sketched with great accuracy from the excellent bookseller to the Pensionnat Heger. She passes along the alleys, wanders to the "green knoll"—the raised ground crowned by a seat which was shadowed by "three fine tall trees growing close"—the spot where the "secret junta" unwittingly reveals to the listening Lucy the answer to the riddle hitherto unsolvable. Then she quits the park, descends the dimly lighted Montagne du Parc [1] ("only one street lies between me and the Rue Fossette"—necessarily the Rue des Douze Apôtres and no other), when the eloping Ginevra thunders past, as already recounted; and so home—to find the Nun's "ghost" deposited in her bed.

[1] Where lived the priest of Ste. Gudule to whom Miss Brontë confessed. This presumably should be the Rue des Mages of *Villette*—a set-off to the real Rue des Minimes.

This is but a type of Charlotte Brontë's method, and it may suffice. Thus did she work up her backgrounds and plan her goings and comings, lavishing upon them as much care and deliberation as upon the stories she constructed and set against them. The method is sound in relation to her talent, for while it imparts to her incidents an aspect of stereoscopic relief, her art subdues the over-insistence on the cold fact of the *décor*, so that the reality which is evolved grips us as a quietly convincing truth.

VI

Later inquirers have not always understood that the premises in the Rue d'Isabelle were not left unchanged after the Brontë sisters' departure. In 1857 important alterations were effected in the dwelling-house, but the school-house was left pretty much as it was. The institution had already become a place of pilgrimage to both English and Americans. The devotees who could scarcely have been very welcome to the misrepresented and injured chiefs of the school, were courteously received, notwithstanding, and shown all the points of interest concentrated in Charlotte Brontë's pages. "And this," they would ask, "is this really the Carré?—this the Réfectoire?"—or what not; and then sometimes a whitening head would thrust itself forth

from a suddenly opened door and snap out, but not angrily, "*Oui!—et moi je suis Monsieur Paul!*"

And now, where this busy little world that hummed with life in the educational centre of the Rue d'Isabelle and helped to form and develop characters which have stood the test in these later days of trial is a scene of cruel desolation. Houses and school buildings have gone. Rubble strews the ground, and a broken branch, thrusting its torn limb through the rubbish here and there, is all that is left of the historic garden. Yet the destruction, as has here been said, is not entirely complete, and (where the encroachments of the vast new works have not wholly covered up or overturned it) sufficient evidence still remains for the practised explorer to reconstitute, in part at least, the old flourishing institutions and buildings that clustered round the spot. Even the first out of the four flights of steps of the Escalier Belliard may yet be seen, though they, too, are to be swallowed up, as soon as may be, when peace returns to heroic Belgium, by the rising road mounting to the Rue Royale. A pictorial record of some fullness will doubtless one day be issued illustrating the temporary home of the honoured sisters, for the material for it exists. Brontë-Heger-land is not destined to pass unpictured and forgotten; its scenes will live for us and

bring nearer to us the more tutored genius of Charlotte Brontë, to whom, on the centenary of her birth, the tribute of our homage is paid to-day.

M H. SPIELMANN.

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FACSIMILE OF A CIRCULAR ISSUED BY THE BRONTË SISTERS IN 1844.

To face p. 110.

THE BRONTË SOCIETY AND ITS WORK

By HERBERT E. WROOT

THE BRONTË SOCIETY AND ITS WORK

In the early days of this Great War, when no one had thought for literary anniversaries, there passed unnoticed the twenty-first birthday of the Brontë Society. It is a rare event in literary history for such an association to attain to its "coming of age." The mortality of infancy and adolescence is high among literary societies; or perhaps it should be considered that since, like the "flies of latter spring," they come fully equipped and in the maxim of energy into their little world, it is but the course of nature that their days are short. They

> lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
> And weave their pretty cells and die.

A good many societies have been founded in England with purpose akin to that of the Brontë Society, with very diverse fields to cultivate, yet only one—the Chaucer Society—has attained to such length of years; and in that

case, brilliantly exceptional, the longevity of the society was rather evidence of the inexhaustible youthfulness of its founder and vital spirit, the late Dr. Furnivall, than of its own inherent virility. With good reason Furnivall called it "my Chaucer Society," and it endured and laboured nearly thirty years in the strength of his will, till he permitted it to sing its *Nunc dimittis* over the great Oxford edition of the "master dear and father reverent" of English poets, the production of which its studies had rendered possible.

Even though they had an inexhaustible mountain in which to quarry, the two Shakespere Societies fell far short of this record. The original society, sustained by the industry of Halliwell-Phillipps and the enthusiasm—the somewhat intemperate enthusiasm, as was unhappily proved—of John Payne Collier, lasted from 1841 to 1853. The New Shakespere Society, another of Dr. Furnivall's literary children, strong in purpose, prolonged its existence to some eighteen years, yet was its strength labour and sorrow ere it was "cut off." Other co-operative efforts of literature have all been comparatively transient. The Wordsworth Society endured as "a bond of union amongst those who are in sympathy with the general teaching and spirit of Wordsworth" for not quite six years; and, whether it be true or not,

as Dean Church grumbled, that "Wordsworthians" fared rather badly at the hands of the Wordsworth Society, the sympathetic souls had dwindled to the secretary and another—the industrious Professor Knight and one patient committee-man—before the Society made up its mind that Grasmere and the mountains constituted, after all, a stronger and more enduring bond of union. The Shelley Society fared even worse. It was late in the field. The name of Shelley had, as Lord Houghton exulted, been already raised by the youth of Oxford from "the obscurity and even the infamy" which had attached to it in earlier days, and there was not much work to do. The society survived, however, long enough to consecrate, under the leadership of Tennyson, a library as memorial and shrine at the poet's birthplace at Horsham, but otherwise left little mark in history. The Browning Society existed but a dozen years—from 1881 to 1893. Perhaps some local Browning Societies less fatally authoritative attained to a mellower age in different parts of the country—their number was at one time considerable; but it is sad to remember that the young ladies of Girton exhausted Browning—or themselves—even during the poet's lifetime. In 1886 they dissolved their Browning Society, and by vote of the members spent the accumulated balance of funds upon chocolates. To some poets such

desertion of high intellectuality for the sensuous pleasures which cloy (and spoil the digestion) might have been as heart-breaking as a *Quarterly Review* attack. But Browning had a sense of humour. How his eyes must have twinkled! Perhaps some day some philosophic bookworm, some twentieth-century Isaac D'Israeli, sympathetic with the calamities which beset literature on its co-operative and corporate side as well as in its individualistic aspect, will set himself to

> find out the cause of this effect,
> Or rather say the cause of this defect,
> For this effect defective comes by cause.

Unless in these latter days the art of keeping a diary has become as atrophied as the art of writing letters, there ought to be on record somewhere, and well worthy of collection, much pungent anecdotage concerning literary associations. Meanwhile, perhaps no one has come closer to an analysis of the centrifugal forces which disperse such organizations than Mr. Max Beerbohm, whose caustic caricature of "Mr. Browning taking tea with the Browning Society" needs no single word of comment.

No imagination, even Mr. Max Beerbohm's own, has risen to the conception of Charlotte or Emily or Anne Brontë serving tea at Haworth Parsonage to the members of the Brontë Society.

Emily would have resented the intrusion, but of Charlotte one is not so sure. Though Charlotte confessed to a cold sweat when Martha Brown, the Parsonage servant—who was promptly snubbed—proclaimed her discovery that the mistress had "been and written the grandest books that ever were seen" and intimated that a meeting was to be held at the Mechanics' Institute to settle about ordering them, one can hardly doubt that she would have faced the situation with the calm courage with which she administered a "comfortable cup of tea" to Mr. Donne—the curate of *Shirley*, who did not like Yorkshire folk—while she sat on guard, ready at a moment's notice to "have it out with him." But the right to existence of such a society is not the attitude in which we may fancy it confronted by the author it studies, but its usefulness in its own day. "It is for my generation and myself that I want the Society in being," said one of the founders of the Browning Society at its inauguration; and every lover of the works of the Brontës, and every reader whose heart has been touched and quickened at the story of the Brontës, has had reason to congratulate himself and his generation that the work of the Brontë Society has been carried forward with so much enthusiasm and industry during these twenty-one years.

The Brontë Society had its origin in a conversation which took place towards the end of the year 1893 in the private office of Mr. Butler Wood, the chief librarian of the Bradford Public Libraries. The incident is unrecorded in the archives of the Society, but Mr. Wood's memory is that there took part in it Mr. J. Horsfall Turner, of Idle, near Bradford, Mr. W. W. Yates, of Dewsbury, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Brigg, M.P., of Kildwick.

The first suggestion came from Mr. Horsfall Turner. Mr. Horsfall Turner was an antiquary of rare energy, who has left in our libraries a whole shelf-ful of memorials of his enterprise. The Brontë episode he took almost in his stride from Saxon charters to modern politics of a characteristically vigorous idiosyncrasy. But Charlotte Brontë was nevertheless a particular interest of his, and enjoying as he did exceptional advantages at one period of his life, through his friendship with Miss Ellen Nussey—Charlotte's lifelong friend and confidant—he demonstrated the depth of his enthusiasm by preparing and printing in their entirety that precious series of letters which Miss Nussey had the prescience to preserve. Unluckily for himself, Mr. Turner's enterprise took insufficient account of the trammels of the law of

copyright, and the whole edition printed had to be destroyed. So that a copy of Mr. Horsfall Turner's *Story of the Brontës* is now among the rarest of bibliographical curiosities. It was, however, a literary calamity modified by some consolation, for the suppression left the field clear for the fuller collection of the Brontë letters to many correspondents which in due season Mr. Clement Shorter gave to us in his two fine volumes, *The Brontës: Life and Letters*. And those readers who cherish the format as well as the matter of a book will congratulate themselves that they have in Mr. Shorter's fair print and paper books worthy of the story they tell. Mr. Turner's books unfortunately revealed him as austerely Puritan in artistic matters as the seventeenth-century divines who —beside the Brontës—were his literary heroes.

Mr. Turner's original conception for a Brontë Club—as he called it—was strictly utilitarian, and was free of any tinge of what critics of the Browning Society reproved as idolatry. He proposed a small body strictly limited in numbers, and in the main composed of those who had written on the Brontës—headed, as he hoped, by Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Birrell, Sir Leslie Stephen, and Sir Wemyss Reid; and the programme of work which he projected was mainly the preparation of a complete and exhaustive bibliography of Brontë literature,

and as a secondary object the preservation of such traditions of the Brontës as might still be current in the dales and moorlands of the Worth valley.

Mr. Butler Wood accords the credit for the wider lines upon which the idea developed to Mr. Yates, though it may be suspected that his own literary tastes had something to do with the matter. Mr. Yates attached great weight to the personal traditions yet to be collected. His keen devotion to his own town of Dewsbury made the Brontë episode in a sense a chapter of the local history, since it was as curate of the church of that ancient parish that the father of the Brontës first appeared in Yorkshire. Mr. Yates favoured also the idea of establishing a Brontë Museum—an institution in which might be brought together such relics as were interesting of the remarkable family, and all that might be gathered of their literary remains. And it was an organization on these lines which ultimately came to birth. One may say here, anticipating the march of events somewhat, that while the Society may well look to these two men, Mr. Horsfall Turner and Mr. Yates, with filial respect, it honours also with especial tenderness among those whose services it has lost by death the memory of Sir John Brigg. Sir John Brigg was native to the soil he long

represented in Parliament: he had grown up in the very atmosphere in which the Brontës moved and had their being. Where few had known the Brontës in anything more than externals, he had known *about* them from his earliest days. So that it was more than his keen Yorkshire intellect and his literary taste which made him an untiring reader and a devoted admirer of the great books which came down from Haworth through Keighley to the world. The Brontë Society, then, was nursed and nourished by Sir John Brigg from its infancy, though his part in its development was achieved so unostentatiously that few outside the Council of the Society realized the energy he put into the Society's affairs. They were glad occasionally after a moorland ramble at Haworth to take tea at the liberally spread tables over which he presided as host, but Sir John Brigg's services to the Society were far more intimate than all that alone implies.

The first public step was the issue in the name of the then Mayor of Bradford (the late Alderman Jonas Whitley) of invitations to a conference, upon December 16, 1893, at the Bradford Town Hall, "to consider the advisability of forming a Brontë Society and Museum." The Rev. W. H. Keeling, for many years headmaster of the Bradford Grammar School, was voted to the chair, and it may be interesting to

record the names of those present. They were: Messrs. E. Alexander, F. C. Barrans, G. Bell; Hugh Bingham (Oakenshaw); Alderman (afterwards Sir) John Brigg (Kildwick); J. J. Brigg (Keighley); W. M. Brookes; John Clough, jun. (Steeton); the Rev. J. W. Dunne (Laisterdyke); C. A. Federer, George Field, W. T. Field; Geddes (Liverpool); J. A. (afterwards Sir Arthur) Godwin; James Gordon; Herbert Hardy (Earlsheaton); H. Hartley (Morton); T. H. Horsfall; the Rev. W. T. Keyworth (Halifax); H. F. Killick, Edmund Lee, W. T. McGowen, Town Clerk of Bradford; Frank Peel (Heckmondwike); Collingwood Pollard (Thornton); John Popplewell (long Chairman of the Bradford Free Libraries Committee); Percival Ross; W. Scruton; A. B. Smith (Keighley); J. J. Stead (Heckmondwike); J. A. Erskine Stuart (Batley); J. H. Tattersfield (Mirfield); Robert Thornton (Heckmondwike); J. Horsfall Turner (Idle); S. P. Unwin (Shipley); C. Watson, F. Denby Wheater (Haworth); Butler Wood, W. W. Yates (Dewsbury), Miss Yates. Encouraging letters and messages were also received from Messrs. W. Ackroyd (Birkenshaw); the Rev. Canon Bardsley (Vicar of Bradford); Jonathan Caldwell (Brighouse); the Rt. Rev. Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon; the Rev. Canon Lowther Clarke (Vicar of Dewsbury and afterwards Bishop of Melbourne); the Misses

Cockshott (Oakworth); Alderman (afterwards the Right Hon.) C. Milnes Gaskell (Wakefield); Mr. (afterwards Sir) Mark Oldroyd, M.P.; Mr. Asa H. Pyrah (Mayor of Dewsbury); Mr. W. E. B. (afterwards Sir William) Priestley; Mr. (afterwards Sir) T. Wemyss Reid, Mr. George Smith, the veteran head of the firm of Smith, Elder & Co.—Charlotte Brontë's publishers; Mr. William Smith (Morley); Mr. Harry Speight (Bingley); Mrs. C. E. Sugden (Haworth); Mrs. Stevenson (Market Harborough); Mr. W. Douglas Walker (New York); Mr. A. H. Wall (Shakespere Museum, Stratford-on-Avon); Mr. Josiah Winn (Halifax); Mr. (afterward Sir) Joseph Woodhead (Huddersfield).

Encouraged with the promise of success in numbers and influence—so much beyond the expectation of the original promoters—the meeting proceeded in high spirits to resolve—

> That a Brontë Society be and is hereby formed, and that the objects of such Society be, amongst other things, to establish a Museum to contain not only drawings, manuscripts, paintings, and other personal relics of the Brontë family, but all editions of their works, the writings of authors upon these works, or upon any member of the family, together with photographs of places or premises with which the family was associated.

Upon this basis the Brontë Society came into

existence. It continued to work upon these simple lines as a literary association, until the growing wealth of its collections and a consequent sense of responsibility rendered the Council appointed to deal with the Society's affairs anxious that the existence and purpose of their organization should in due form be made known to the law of the land. Consequently in 1902 the Society secured a certificate of Incorporation under the Companies Act, 1862.

In its primary task of establishing a Museum of Brontë relics the Society has had a great measure of success. The first question which arose was that of situation. The literary pilgrim may well think that the question settles itself, and that only amid the "heath-clad showery hills" of Haworth where those "unquiet souls" found themselves would such an institution be in its true atmosphere. But there were difficult questions of accommodation and guardianship to be arranged, and some members of the Council thought the permanence of the institution and appeal to the widest possible circle of readers dictated the establishment of the collection in one of the larger towns or cities of the West Riding. Mr. Yates urged the claims of Dewsbury—others thought Bradford a quite natural as well as convenient centre, for were not the Brontë sisters born in Thornton, within the boundaries of the old parish and the modern

city of Bradford? Haworth, of whom hard things have in the past most unjustly been said, was not unmindful of its own. Haworth Brontë lovers—and they ever were numerous—took a good part in the organization of the Society, and the governing body of the district, with local patriotism, pressed the claims of their little moorland town. It was, however, only upon a divided vote of six to four that Haworth was chosen—though the minute-book of the Society takes note of the fact that before the voting was reached the Haworth members of the Council had trustfully left to catch their train. There has never been a moment of doubt since that the decision was wise.

The ideal locality for the Museum commemorating the Brontës would obviously be the Parsonage-house consecrated by the romance and tragedy of their lives. Precedents as well as sentiment pointed a finger in that direction. The chief shrine of Shakesperians at Stratford-on-Avon is naturally the poet's birthplace; that of lovers of Milton the little Buckinghamshire cottage, wreathed in sweetbrier and vine and the twisted eglantine, which must ever have remained in the inward eye of the poet in his days of blindness as the very picture of rural delight. The Scottish literary pilgrim turns to the little thatched clay biggin of but and ben on the road to Alloway, where Burns first saw the

light, with even greater charm perhaps than to the pretentious but (let it be confessed) rather clumsy magnificence of Abbotsford. And there are in this land of ours simple homes richly "humanized"—as Mrs. Browning put it—with cherished associations, standing as memorials of Bunyan, Carlyle, Stevenson, and Barrie, of Cowper the poet, of Borrow and Fitzgerald. Above all in appeal, perhaps, is the Dove Cottage at the Town End of Grasmere—that "little nook of mountain ground"—"the loveliest spot that man hath ever found"—which is inseparably associated with Wordsworth's days of poverty and genius. The difficulties in the way of securing the Haworth Parsonage to house the Brontë Society's collections have hitherto proved insuperable. The building is vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and they are bound to administer their estates on the strictest business principles without fear, favour, or literary sentiment. The difficulties are primarily thus a matter of finance, and then perhaps of red tape. The red tape would probably be easy to cut, but for the present the Society has not felt itself in a financial position to go to the Commissioners with a proposal for the purchase or the leasing of the old Parsonage. The securing of that building, so rich in memories, is, however, an ideal by no means lost sight of.

In other rooms—premises without romance but with convenience enough for the present and just at the head of the steep village street by the church—the little Museum has been arranged. It is to be supposed, of course, that the officers of a society formed to do honour to the Brontës would be gratified to find the Brontës already high in honour with the collectors, but the circumstances must have been also just a little embarrassing. Even if the American millionaires had not commenced to lay up for themselves treasures of a literary character, prices for the more desirable of Brontë manuscripts might reasonably be framed on a considerable scale. Emily's and Anne's autographs are not very much more numerous than those of Shakespere himself, for after their deaths Charlotte destroyed nearly all within her reach; and Charlotte's own, though not rare, are almost always so characterful that the slightest scrap of her writing is sure to be cherished as of interest. With her, of course, the autograph collector knows nothing of the mere commonplaces of life, the uninspiring acceptances of invitations to dinner or excuses for their refusal, and the like, which mark the course through the world of most successful authors. So that the Society's representative has had to bite his lip when collections of letters and even single documents have been offered in the sale-rooms and

have attracted bids altogether beyond the Society's resources to compete.

Such esteem in the market has brought other dangers. That apt and versatile rascal the literary forger has been tempted to try his hand at supplying the demands, and there have been from time to time at least a few proved forgeries of Brontë documents put before the public, and others much to be suspected. Even a great institution like the National Portrait Gallery, for all the learning and critical acumen of its staff, has not been proof against these dangers, as the unlucky picture of "Charlotte Brontë" "wearin' of the green" bought in 1906 proved.

Moreover the Brontë Museum is not merely a collection of literary and artistic objects, the genuineness of which may be tested, but it includes objects of domestic association with the family. As may be imagined, these present frequent difficulties of provenance, due not to dishonesty but (shall one say?) to the charitable disposition of the owner to give his rather doubtful treasure all the benefit of the doubt. Thus some curious facts have come to light. For instance, there are extant no fewer than five pianos from the Brontë household. Who would have supposed that a household so small, with so little money for superfluities, and in musical matters of no particular virtuosity, could have had use for that number of instruments?

THE "BLACK BULL" INN, HAWORTH.

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Spectacles worn by the Rev. Patrick Brontë are in the hands of dealers in such matters as numerous as though some member of the family of the incumbent of Haworth had, like the unlucky heir of his neighbour the Vicar of Wakefield, bought a bargain lot at the fair. It is only just to say, however, that such relics of unequivocal authenticity are rather numerous. Indeed, three pairs have been admitted to the Museum.

Steering a cautious way amid these dangers, the Council of the Society has laid the foundation of an excellent and most interesting collection. No doubt now that, when the permanence of the organization and the evergreen freshness of the Brontë story in the public mind have been proved by time, Brontë collectors who have collected for love and not for "an investment" will appreciate the opportunity of handing to the Society's guardianship treasures which they do not choose to imagine scattered to the winds in the sordid profanation of the auction. Already at least one distinguished American Brontë enthusiast, and more than one on this side of the Atlantic, has intimated privately to the Council of the Society an intention to "remember in his will" the little institution at Haworth.

Little space need here be devoted to a review of the collection, for there has been issued among the Society's publications an annotated and illus-

trated catalogue of the Museum, compiled by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. T. Field. The Brontë student, it may, however, be said, will feel that all goes well and upon the right lines. Already the series of portraits is fairly full. No one, of course, will grudge the fact that Richmond's drawing of Charlotte Brontë is here only in reproduction. The original is in the National Portrait Gallery—where it ought to be; and Branwell Brontë's portrait, too, of his sister Emily, for all its technical imperfections, sustains, not without dignity, a great name among her peers in the national collection. The Brontë Society has, however, a number of pencil sketches by Branwell of his sisters and a water-colour of Emily which is probably by him, though it has come to be attributed to Charlotte's own hand. But Charlotte certainly drew a portrait of her sister Anne which is very welcome here. Anne was the beauty of the family, and the picture suggests a sweet expression of countenance, though her neck is hardly "in drawing," as an artist would say. But we must remember that the "Books of Beauty" of the time favoured for ladies a peculiar elongation of neck. Tom Moore set forth the ideal throat for a lady as "swan-like," and the ideal has evidently affected the real in Charlotte's picture. As for Branwell himself, there is here a silhouette—a work not without a great deal of character—and a large

and well modelled medallion by Leyland of Halifax, who was one of his associates in the days when Branwell's optimism foresaw fame and fortune as a painter. The original daguerreotype of the father, heavily stocked, and grimmer in expression than the worst gossip of Haworth ever made him in reality, is here, and beside it is a water-colour picture by a professional likeness-maker of Mrs. Brontë, endorsed laconically by the old man "This is my wife." Mr. Brontë did not wear his heart on his sleeve. Of those who came within the Brontë orbit a very good series has been accumulated. There are gaps yet to be filled, but the institution has become the natural depositary for the portraits of the notabilities of the country-side, and many of those who figure in the novels or are named in the letters are represented. Of personal souvenirs of the Brontës there are many. Charlotte's husband, the Rev. Arthur Bell Nicholls, who had so brief a married life after his long and patient waiting for her hand, preserved his wife's demure wedding-dress and bridal bouquet, and they are here. From his keeping, half a century after Charlotte's death, came also toys from the Haworth nursery, painting appliances, and intimate treasures like desks and work-boxes, which apparently had never been opened since Charlotte herself closed the lids. In one of them, among other cherished trifles, was found the silver medal

which Charlotte gained at Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head. Miss Nussey has told the story of this relic. The medal was a trophy at the school, to be worn for the time being by the girl who most distinguished herself in "the fulfilment of duties." Charlotte won it in her first half-year at school, and never had to pass it on to a more exemplary companion, so that upon her leaving the school the medal was presented to her. One feels that such a relic is in its proper place in the Museum. There are pencil and water-colour drawings by almost every member of the family—very numerous examples by Charlotte, including a really spirited drawing of her dog Floss, but most of them are precise and painful reproductions of steel engravings or lithographs. Their interest is mainly their disclosure of an imaginative interest in the Haydon and Stothard type of composition hardly tolerable to the modern generation of art-lovers. A drawing by Emily of her faithful and much loved bull-dog Keeper—who himself played his part in *Shirley*, and is remembered as having broken-heartedly followed his young mistress's coffin into the very church—this is priceless.

The budding literary ambition is represented by the microscopic magazines written by the children in the Haworth nursery—those queer little compositions in which they practised their 'prentice hands in wild poetry, and wilder prose.

REPRODUCTION OF WATER-COLOUR DRAWING OF DOG "FLOSS," BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË.
Now in the Brontë Museum.

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A good many of Branwell's compositions are in the collection. Those of the sisters have produced such prodigious prices in the sale-rooms that the Society has had to content itself with a specimen and await the generosity of its friends. Then, of course, there are duly represented the books by which fame came—the poems and then the novels. Most of these are in modern editions or translations. First editions will no doubt come some day. The first step in the ladder of fame is represented here, and one rejoices in the circumstance that it has been preserved. Every one remembers that of the little book of poems on the publication of which the sisters expended a bequest from their aunt only two copies were sold. One of these somehow came into the hands of Frederick Enoch, the author of the song, once famous, "My sweetheart when a boy." His perception was sufficiently acute to recognize genius in the work, and he wrote to the unknown poetesses for their autographs. Here is the sheet of demurely written signatures—"Currer Bell," "Ellis Bell" and "Acton Bell"—in hands unmistakably feminine, which was sent in response to the request, but cautiously posted in London, through the instrumentality of their publishers, lest their anonymity should be compromised.

At the opening of the exhibition the Society was privileged to have awhile on loan the original manuscripts of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*—

out of the almost inexhaustible store of treasures belonging to the firm of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., the original publishers of the novels. But as a permanent possession, of course, such relics are beyond hope. The only one of the manuscripts which did not pass into the possession of the firm—that of *The Professor*, or, as it was originally called, *The Master*—is now in the collection of Mr. Pierpont Morgan in New York. But already the series of letters by Charlotte is rich in interest. A few have been bought, but for the most part the Society looks with gratitude to Mr T. J. Wise, the well-known collector, for the gift of documents of the tenderest interest. Among them, bound sumptuously, are those last faint lines in pencil, almost too sacred for full publication in print, which Charlotte wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey from "my weary bed" within a few hours of her death. These are where they should be—in the keeping of those who will reverence them.

A few manuscripts of Mrs. Gaskell, of Mr. Nicholls, and of Mr. Brontë are included, among them being an elaborate list of French phrases compiled by Mr. Brontë for his own use during his expedition to Brussels in 1842 to deposit his daughters in the famous school in the Rue d'Isabelle. Space forbids that the review of the little collection of treasures should be carried farther. Suffice it to say that Brontë lovers

and even the casual public have found encouragement and reward for frequent visits to the Museum. During the twenty-one years it has been open there have paid for admission more than 54,000 persons. This takes no account of the members of the Society, who are admitted freely and whose visits and revisits are unrecorded.

The first publication issued by the Society—in January 1895—was an extensive "Bibliography of the Works of the Brontë Family: including a list of books and magazine articles on the Brontës, together with a notice of works relating to Haworth." It was prepared by Mr. Butler Wood, who early in the Society's work had been marked out by the Council to act as Bibliographical and Publication Secretary. This first effort was followed two and a half years later by a supplementary list. Some evidence of the interest which successive generations of readers and writers have taken in the Brontës and their books, is afforded by the fact that these two bibliographical lists enumerated nearly seven hundred items. And they are now twenty years or more old. Since the Society's work initiated a new era of widespread interest, a positive flood of literature discussing the Brontës has proceeded from the press, and it is quite probable that a second supplement to the Bibliography could be compiled as extensive as both the previous lists taken together. It is

a task for the future. Meanwhile one may note that the cosmopolitan character of the reputation of the novels is indicated by the fact that beside the numerous reprints which have appeared in England, Scotland, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia, translations of one or more have been published in France, Russia, Germany, and Austria, and dramatized versions have been printed in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, and Denmark. *Jane Eyre* has most commended itself to the foreign taste. Mr. G. K. Chesterton once shocked the Society by commending *Jane Eyre* as the best "penny dreadful," the most thrilling detective-story ever written in English, and he lamented that it alone of the novels of Charlotte Brontë followed the true melodramatic sequence. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Chesterton's striking and unexpected way of putting things, the truth which he was emphasizing (or over-emphasizing) no doubt lies at the root of the popularity of *Jane Eyre* in a foreign dress. *Shirley*, despite those qualities—or perhaps because of them—which make it most typical and photographically real of all Yorkshire novels ever written, has also found some acceptance in France and Germany. But, curiously, *Villette*, which many English readers would be disposed to regard as the most delightful, the most powerful of the series,

has never found a French translator—and that notwithstanding its brilliantly drawn background of the little city of Brussels. Perhaps the main reason is that the point of view is so singularly individual, so remote and perhaps so incomprehensible to the Continental mind ; for the original reason which prevented its translation — the desire to spare the feelings of persons all too easily to be identified—can have little weight when after this lapse of years all who were concerned have passed away.

It is a little curious, too, that on the Continent the name of "Brontë" is still almost unknown, and the works of the sisters still bear only their early pseudonyms, "Currer Bell," "Ellis Bell," and "Acton Bell." It is only within the last few years that, in the pages mainly of the Abbé Dimnet, there has reached Continental readers some echo of the pathetic story which surrounds the production of the novels and some fragrance of the peat-smoke of the old homesteads of the Haworth moors and hillsides. Even M. Maeterlinck's contribution to Brontë literature is rather a study of *Wuthering Heights in vacuo*. He divined something of the truth, but did not really comprehend its author—she

> whose soul
> Knew no fellow for might,
> Passion, vehemence, grief,
> Daring, since Byron died.

In the earlier days of the Society a good deal of labour was devoted to the task of searching out the originals of the places which Charlotte Brontë drew in her novels and of the characters with which she peopled those scenes. Charlotte Brontë's genius was curiously objective. Quite as much as any of the writers of her generation she was "subjective" in her themes. Just as much as Wordsworth, though without a trace of his egotism, she was interested—and interested her readers—in the working of her own mind and of her own emotions. Except in that single and splendid instance when she allowed her fancy to conceive what might have been had Nature endowed the stalwart spirit of her sister Emily with a healthy body and the social opportunities of a lady of a manor, Charlotte herself was her own heroine, and her spiritual adventures were, with singularly little translation and imaginative extension, the purpose of her work. It is this realism which appeals to the soul of the reader; but it is supported by an appeal to the mind through a precision of observation and meticulous delineation of the objects and the people around her, such as one finds in equal degree in few other writers. If the Celt within her indulged in the building of castles of romance, the Yorkshirewoman saw to it that they were constructed of sound materials and firm based as solid earth

—the rough rock of mind and heart which she found in the men and women about her, the picturesque and enduring gritstone and oak of the Pennine homesteads, or maybe the brick and stucco of her Belgian schooldays.

Thus Yorkshire folk recognized even in the backgrounds of the drama a phase of interest lost to the stranger—or only unconsciously enjoyed—that interest in familiar things pictured which is of universal appeal. The examination of origins did not, of course, imply blindness or numbness to the greater purpose—the psychological drama, but was the development of a further charm for those who could share it. One need not stay here to defend this research, though it has been denied that the admirer of a work of art has any right to peep behind the veil which hides the artist in his studio, to ask any questions about his models, or to analyze his palette. That attitude was hardly possible even as a monastic ideal, and generations far removed from one another in other points of view have agreed in treasuring even indifferent pictures when they could recognize Dante, or Raphael, or the young Keats drawn to the life in figures in the background, and to accept even the faultless craftsmanship of a Millais as enhanced in interest by the knowledge that his picture was something more than a fancy out of Boccaccio or Chaucer, but gave us veritable likenesses of his

kindred spirits in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

It is true this work of identifying originals in the novels of Charlotte Brontë was commenced a little too soon for the authoress's own peace of mind, and, as is the way of a gossip-loving world, it was mostly the least complimentary features which were recognized—Cromwell's wart rather than his massive brow and far-seeing eye—and was in consequence resented. But one could wish that it had entered into the heart of one of Charlotte's contemporaries to have annotated her novels, for much that bears the convincing similitude of realism in personality and circumstance is not now to be connected with its origin.

The first volume of the *Transactions* of the Society contained valuable aids to the study of the topography of the novels. Dr. J. A. Erskine Stuart, who had been perhaps the first to give the subject earnest study, read to the Society in 1894 a suggestive paper on the Brontë Nomenclature.

The Rev. T. Keyworth and Mr. J. J. Stead in 1896 put before the Society clear evidence for the identification of the Morton of *Jane Eyre* with the little Derbyshire village of Hathersage, the home of the Rev. Henry Nussey, brother of Charlotte's friend, Ellen Nussey—a zealous young clergyman who was beyond question the model

HATHERSAGE.

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for the strongly individual character of St. John Rivers in the novel. Mr. Stead also compiled in 1896, for an excursion of the Society to the country about Birstall depicted in *Shirley*, a precise little guide-book—if it may be so called—which has been very useful and was reprinted by the Society, with additions and excellent illustrations, ten years later. And the late Mr. P. F. Lee recounted some associations of Charlotte with Bridlington which threw a little light on some passages in the novels and much more upon a pleasant episode of Charlotte's life. In a series of parts of the *Transactions* of the Society—constituting the third volume—the writer of these lines was permitted to bring together a more exhaustive account, from published and unpublished sources, of *The Persons and Places of the Brontë Novels.*

In the same spirit, though less directly associated with the Brontës and their writings, have been the studies of the local history of Haworth and of Thornton which the members have received through the instrumentality of the Society. The former was originally written by Mr. J. Frederick Greenwood, of Haworth, to be put into the hands of the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, on the occasion of the Bradford meeting in 1900, when an excursion to Haworth was included among the relaxations from the sterner labours of the lecture-

rooms. Rightly judging the work to be of too much permanent interest to be lost sight of in the casual papers of that meeting, the Council of the Society secured permission to reprint it, and it now takes its place in the second volume of the *Transactions*. The historical sketch of Thornton entitled *Thornton and the Brontës* was issued as a separate publication by Mr. William Scruton, the author of many historical studies of Bradford and its neighbourhood, and by the generosity of Sir William Priestley, M.P., a copy was presented to each member of the Society. The work is of special interest to Brontë students not only for its careful presentation of the remote little village in which the Brontës were born—an environment which affected the novels themselves in many ways—but also because there are embodied in it the impressions of several of those who had personal association with the Brontës in their own home.

The Society has also manifested its interest in the topographical side of Brontë studies by organizing each summer an excursion to one place or another associated with the Brontës and their books. Haworth, of course, has claimed most attention, and assemblies there have been numerous—sometimes to visit the Museum, sometimes to enjoy the scent of the heather on the moors, sometimes to push farther afield to the old homesteads Ponden and Wycoller, which were

familiar scenes to the sisters and find some reflection in the scenery of the novels. Several visits have been made to Oakwell Hall—the principal scene of *Shirley*—and to other spots of interest in its vicinity—to the Kirkby Lonsdale district on the borders of Westmorland and the Derbyshire village of Hathersage painted in *Jane Eyre*, and on one occasion it was proposed to undertake a visit to Brussels. Unluckily the enterprise was postponed, and before another opportunity arose the Rue d'Isabelle and the old school buildings themselves had been wholly swept away in the grandiose preparations for the erection of a Central railway station.

The reading of papers, a form of activity which has been disparaged as the ploughing of sands, was, as will have been noticed, not the prime and supreme object of the Brontë Society as it was with the Wordsworth, Browning, and similar societies. But the members have very gladly listened to all who had a "message." It may be confessed that it was with the hope of securing for the Brontës a place in that noble series of addresses on literary subjects, for which Lord Rosebery secured the gratitude of book-lovers, that the members at the outset of the Society elected his lordship as their president. Lord Rosebery was at the moment engrossed with the labours of the Foreign Office, and very soon afterwards was to become Premier. Apparently

he hesitated ; he sent the Society an encouraging assurance of his interest in their work, but ultimately declined the office. Lord Houghton, afterwards the Marquis of Crewe, himself a poet and the son of a Yorkshire poet, accepted the position of president, but though he held it for twelve years he was unhappily prevented from taking any part in the work of the Society. He was succeeded in 1906 by Sir John Brigg, M.P., who remained president till his death in 1911, when Mrs. Humphry Ward acceded to the request of the Society to undertake the duties. Of Sir John Brigg's part in the affairs of the Society something has already been said, and Mrs. Ward has on one or two occasions found it possible to encourage the Society by her presence and speech.

Other distinguished students of literature have from time to time addressed the Society. Sir T. Wemyss Reid, who was, after Mrs. Gaskell, the first to raise the veil for worshippers at the Brontë shrine, was only prevented by illness from formally opening the Museum in 1895, and a paper which he prepared for that occasion, and an address he delivered to the Society in 1898, are printed among the Society's *Transactions*. Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Augustine Birrell could never be persuaded to add anything by way of personal encouragement to the Society beyond the stimulus afforded by their

admirable contributions to Brontë literature. But Mr. Shorter, the editor of the letters—to whom all Brontë students are supremely grateful—and Sir W. Robertson Nicoll were early in their assistance and counsel. The literary problems of the Brontës, their genius, their place in the history of the English novel, have been very suggestively discussed by Dr. R. Garnett, long of the British Museum, Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. A. C. Benson—who devoted themselves particularly to the work of Charlotte Brontë ; by Lord Haldane and Mr. J. Fotheringham—who dealt specifically with Emily Brontë ; and aspects of the subject have been treated more generally by Professor G. Saintsbury, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Ernest de Sélincourt, Professor C. E. Vaughan, and Mr. Thomas Seccombe. Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe, who has enriched the Haworth district and the wild country beyond by an assiduous collection and a skilled literary treatment of a mass of tradition untouched by the Brontës, dealt almost lyrically of "The Spirit of the Moors" in one address to the Society ; and Mr. Keighley Snowden, another novelist native to the soil who has found yet other sources of local inspiration, has been among those who have paid tribute to the genius of the Brontë family. The contributions of Sir Sidney Lee, of the Right Rev. J. E. C. Welldon (Dean of Manchester), and of Mrs. Ellis H. Chadwick

have been of a biographical character. Sir Sidney Lee related many interesting reminiscences still current in the family of the late Sir George Smith, concerning Charlotte Brontë's relations with the firm of Smith, Elder & Co., and of her visits to London. Bishop Welldon dealt with certain Manchester literary associations, for it will be remembered that it was whilst at Manchester that Charlotte Brontë commenced to write *Jane Eyre*. These and other addresses have much enriched the Society's *Transactions*. Pioneer work in the study of material untouched hitherto—the Juvenilia—has been carried out by Dr. George Edwin MacLean, the former head of the University of Iowa, in the United States, and he has shown that there exists here a profitable field which it may be hoped will continue to be cultivated. One must not forget in this brief review of the Society's publications that through the generosity of Mr. John Waugh—an enthusiastic Brontë collector—the Society was enabled to reprint for the members' use the admirable article which Miss Nussey wrote in *Scribner's Magazine* as long ago as 1871, preserving most valuable reminiscences of her life-long friend. Miss Nussey had attained a very advanced age before the Society came into existence, and she could never be persuaded to leave the seclusion with which she ever surrounded herself to take a part in the Society's

affairs, but she manifested the keenest interest in its work, and many of the relics which she had preserved find a place in the Museum.

From the beginning the Society has been fortunate in its officers. The duties of Secretary were at the outset carried out by Mr. J. Horsfall Turner. On his retirement Mr. Butler Wood was elected as Bibliographical Secretary and Mr. William T. Field as Corresponding Secretary, and it is fair to say that the Society owes much of its success to their enthusiastic energy and caution. The Treasurers of the Society have been the late F. G. Galloway, of Bradford (1894 to his death in 1896); the late Alfred Newboult, of Bradford (1896 to his death in 1897); Mr. J. J. Stead, of Heckmondwike (1898–1906); Mr. Frederick A. T. Mossman, of Bradford (1906–1915); and Mr. W. Robertshaw (since 1915). Though the membership of the Society has been drawn from practically all parts of the English-speaking world, it has been a matter of convenience that the members of the Council of the Society have principally been residents within easy reach of Haworth and Bradford, and it is satisfactory that there has never been a moment when interest in the Society's affairs has flagged. The following have acted as chairmen of the Council :—Sir John Brigg, M.P. (1894–1896); Mr. J. J. Brigg, of Keighley (1897); Mr. J. F. Green-

wood, of Haworth (1898–1900) ; Mr. W. W. Yates, of Dewsbury (1901) ; Mr. S. P. Unwin, of Shipley (1902–1905) ; Mr. Butler Wood, of Bradford (1906–1908) ; Mr. J. J. Stead, of Heckmondwike (1909–1910) ; Miss Cockshott, of Oakworth (1911) ; Mr. W. de Witt Blackstock, of Chapel-en-le-Frith (1912) ; Mr. John Watkinson, of Huddersfield (1913) ; Mr. George Day, of Dewsbury (1914) ; and Mr. Frederick A. T. Mossman, of Bradford (1915–1916).

THE PLACE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FICTION

By Dr. RICHARD GARNETT, C.B.

An Address delivered to the Brontë Society at Keighley, on January 23, 1904

THE PLACE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN NINETEENTH CENTURY FICTION

The invitation to address, on the subject of Charlotte Brontë, an audience of Charlotte Brontë's country people, who, if her life could have been prolonged to the present day, would have been her friends and neighbours, and failing that are her sincere venerators and admirers, may well be regarded as both an honour and a pleasure by any to whose lot it may fall. In my case it is attended with peculiar gratification, inasmuch as, though not a native or an inhabitant of the Brontë country, I may claim some affinity with it. My ancestors, when I first encounter them, are found dwelling in the little moorland hamlet of Eldwick, in the neighbourhood of Bingley, and I was myself baptized in Bingley Parish Church. The possibility of walking from Bingley to Haworth and back in a long summer morning was, when I was younger and more active than I am now, victoriously demonstrated by myself. I feel, therefore, that I am not altogether among

strangers, and that I may claim some little participation in the honour which the birth of Charlotte Brontë at Haworth reflects upon the district. Happy the district which does possess a minor tutelary divinity, or at least a local hero or heroine! Daniel Webster, addressing the citizens of Rochester in the State of New York, a place celebrated for its lofty waterfall, informed them that no people had ever lost their liberties who had a waterfall forty feet high. A tall statement; taller, some think, than the waterfall. But it is perfectly true that a community with a great memory of person or event to which it can and does look up is more certain than a community less fortunate in this particular of retaining its self-respect.

The very fact, however, that I share in the patriotic feeling which has founded and which maintains the Brontë Society, admonishes me to be cautious in my treatment of Charlotte Brontë. Among the reports of the proceedings of previous meetings which have been kindly sent me for perusal I observe an excellent remark, not emanating from a distinguished visitor but from one of yourselves, that there is a danger attending all societies formed for the study and celebration of particular authors, the danger, namely, that the author in question may come to be regarded as the centre, so to speak, of a solar system, around whom all other authors

revolve like minor luminaries. This would be a wrong position even for a Shakespeare or a Dante, or a Goethe, not to say a Spenser or a Chaucer. There is no centre for the universe of Literature but the ideal of Literature herself, the light that never was on sea or land. Especially is this danger aggravated when, as in our case, patriotic fervour blends with æsthetic admiration. Within due limits this fervour is a most excellent thing. It supplies warmth and colour; to vary slightly a saying of Emerson's, it sets criticism aflame with emotion: nay, it aids to the shortcoming of the critical faculty. As so finely said by Shelley, "Love where Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise." But, carried to excess, it affixes a note of provincialism upon the admirers, and, which is much worse, upon the object of their admiration also. This imputation of provincialism may be extremely unjust, but so long as it adheres it is fatal, and rightly so, for provincialism in the sense in which I am employing the term denotes a stratum of mind below the region of the highest excellence, permanently and irremediably at a lower level. It is not like a stain upon a fine stuff, it is a stuff of inferior texture throughout; and in worse plight than material stuff inasmuch as it cannot be converted into a finer material by mechanical process, as Sir John Cutler's worsted stockings became silk stockings by assiduous

darning. I will not say that it cannot be dyed to look for awhile like the better quality, but such dyes are deficient in permanence, and you cannot dye a second-rate author once a fortnight, like a Persian's beard. We could not do Charlotte Brontë a greater disservice than to fix the note of Provincialism upon her. Instead, therefore, of devoting my paper to an encomium upon her, which might be perilous, I shall compare her with those great, and, as I frankly admit, in many respects greater, authors of her time with whom she admits of comparison, and endeavour to show that she has a sphere of her own independent of any of theirs, which she occupies with as much mastery as any of them occupy their own, and which but for her would have remained unoccupied by any first-class writer. The sphere I mean is a sphere of subjective feeling in the narrowest sense of the term. I am not comparing Charlotte Brontë with writers like George Eliot, who delineate subjective emotion from the outside as creators or observers, and paint states of feeling most alien to their own, inspired by passions of which they themselves have had no experience. Such a method is a blending of the objective and subjective ; it is subjective in so far as it delineates mental states, and only uses incident as a means of producing those states ; but it is objective in so far as it describes conditions

external to the author, and unshared by him. The subjectivity of Charlotte Brontë is that more intense subjectivity of which, when fictitious narrative is its medium, Byron is perhaps the most conspicuous example in our literature, where fictitious narrative is merely the means of expressing the writer's own personality, and, substantially, story and character and reflection are but the external projection of his own being. In making the round of Charlotte Brontë and those of her contemporaries who have pretensions to stand in the first rank, I think we shall find that she is the only one who absolutely conforms to this model : and if so, she has a sphere of her own ; and if this is the case, and if she fills this sphere with no less power and mastery than her most eminent contemporaries fill theirs, she is no less entitled to the first-class rank than they are, even though her sphere may be considerably more restricted. Of course she was very far from having the field of subjective fiction of the intenser type entirely to herself. The number of novels of this type published in the Early and Middle Victorian periods was very great, and many of them were very excellent fictions, but I do not think that there are any besides hers for which any one at the present day would be disposed to claim the attribute of genius. One result of this method of treatment must be that we shall have less to say of Charlotte Brontë

herself and more of her contemporaries than might be expected in a discourse of which she is the professed subject. But it is well in her own interest to turn aside for awhile from the direct contemplation of her as an isolated literary phenomenon, and note how she stands with reference to those kindred geniuses who share with her the admiration of posterity. If she appeared as the satellite of any of these she would have to be content with a secondary position. But I think it will appear that she occupies quite a distinct position of her own, and fills a place to which they do not pretend. I do not, of course, intend by this a merely local position as the laureate of the moorlands, or even as the literary representative of the great West Riding of Yorkshire. It is here that the caution which I have ventured to give against provincialism is applicable. The West Riding may and should glory in her ; but if she is to rank among great writers, it must be shown that her West Riding tales are as fit for universal humanity as George Sand's idylls of Berrichon country life, no less steeped in local colouring than Charlotte Brontë's novels, but readable from China to Peru.

The great novelists of the early and middle divisions of the Victorian era, who constitute the constellation of which we maintain Charlotte Brontë to have been a bright particular star, are Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Kingsley,

Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Bulwer, Borrow, and Disraeli. The list is rigidly framed, excluding writers so excellent in their respective styles as Mrs. Oliphant, Miss Yonge, and Wilkie Collins. I think it will be allowed that the quality of genius may be predicated of them all. Some doubts might possibly arise respecting the claims of Bulwer and Trollope to this divine attribute : but, even if the men were not in the strictest sense geniuses, their talent appears all the more prodigious, and their productiveness renders them more conspicuous in our literature than writers of finer endowments whose spheres were more limited and partial.

Dickens and Thackeray, though each had too much good taste to depreciate the other openly, neither admired nor sympathized with each other as they might have done. Nevertheless, their names are as intimately coupled in our literature as are in German literature the names of the two poets whose union in mind and heart was most perfect, Goethe and Schiller, and for the same reason, not merely because they were illustrious contemporaries, but because they are both the contrasts to and the complements of each other. Dickens is the prose poet, Thackeray the consummate master of prose. Dickens is the great painter of the teeming life of the humbler orders of society : Thackeray of the higher and of the upper middle classes and those parasitic growths

of humbler origin—the valet, the bill discounter, the toady, and the like—which insinuate themselves into their sphere. Dickens is the unsurpassed master of broad humour whether jovial or grotesque; Thackeray of humour in its more refined manifestations. Thackeray is a most admirable writer both of humorous and pathetic verse, but you can scarcely call him a poet: Dickens is rarely other than a poet, though much beside, but his metrical performances are insignificant. Neither touch Charlotte Brontë anywhere, they leave the field entirely open for her peculiar gift: and, notwithstanding her enthusiastic admiration for Thackeray, she would have written as she has written if he had not existed.

It is scarcely needful to discuss the relation of Anthony Trollope and George Eliot to Charlotte Brontë, as they both came after her, and had there been any question of borrowing or of influence, they would evidently have been the indebted parties. In fact no such question arises: but it is impossible, in however brief a survey of Charlotte Brontë's position in the literature of her time, to pass over the strong affinity between her work and a portion of George Eliot's. At first sight this is not so apparent, owing to the great dissimilarity of atmosphere and environment. George Eliot never came into Yorkshire, or resided at Brussels, or was brought up at a semi-charity school, or shared the hard lot of

private-school teachers or governesses. Charlotte Brontë knew little about the Midland counties, or Florence, or political agitations, or foreign gaming tables. Nevertheless there is one fibre almost identical, or if distinction there be it is that in Charlotte Brontë's case the fibre is the whole woman, while in George Eliot's it is but one string of a most ample harp. I mean the fibre of passion. Passion is the dominant note of Charlotte Brontë's, nay it is more, it is the music. Take away this ardent, impetuous, sometimes tempestuous feeling, and little remains. But it exists equally in the rich nature of George Eliot, only in company with so many other emotions as to be much less conspicuous. Take, however, the character of Maggie Tulliver, and you will see passion fully as intense and fully as genuine as any that Charlotte Brontë ever depicted : only surrounded with such a crowd of circumstances into which passion does not enter, but which are represented with equal mastery, that it does not produce the same overwhelming effect. You cannot well think of Maggie Tulliver without the three aunts coming to mind also. The point for us, however, is that there is no trace of any direct influence of Charlotte Brontë upon George Eliot. Both drew from the book of Nature, both obeyed the precept : Look into thy heart and write. There can be no doubt that Maggie is a closer portrait of George Eliot

than any of her other personages, but she is only one aspect of a various and opulent nature, while Jane Eyre and Caroline Helston and Lucy Snowe are substantially Charlotte Brontë herself. Hence their surpassing force; they gain in intensity what they lose in breadth. In truth to nature and in the interest of person and situation, there is nothing to choose between Charlotte and her successor. It is worthy of remark that Charlotte Brontë owes much of her energy of representation to her custom of writing in the first person. Two of her three novels are so composed, and hence emotion comes straight from author to reader without the interposition of any medium. This method has its disadvantages, but is excellent for the subjective writer whose forte is passion. *The Sorrows of Werther* could not otherwise have been made impressive, but when Goethe came to give a picture of general society he dropped it: nor is it a usual method with the novelists who have given us entire worlds of personages, Scott and Dickens, and George Eliot. I might almost add Anthony Trollope, though perhaps the bulk of the latter's work might be more correctly described as constituting not a world but a panorama. A marvellous panorama it is of "all sorts and conditions of men," and if wanting the creative breath which pervades Dickens it may at least be said that Trollope's observation sometimes aids him

BIRTHPLACE OF THE BRONTË CHILDREN AT THORNTON.

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where Dickens's deserts him. Dickens is a poet, and a poet cannot work unless he be in some degree in sympathy with his subject. Dickens's sympathy apparently abandoned him when he came to deal with the higher classes, and his portraits of these are little better than caricatures. He is the painter, whose ability to render faithfully what he sees distinctly may be impaired by the state of his nerves, or any one of a thousand accidents. But Trollope is like a camera ; fit the instrument up properly, bring the object to it or it to the object, and you may be sure of a faithful rendering, though it may depend much upon the state of the atmosphere whether bright or prosaic. It is evident therefore that he can have little in common with Charlotte Brontë, and that each is far from encroaching on the other's sphere.

In truth, three out of the four novelists who have been mentioned are parted from Charlotte Brontë by a wide and deep gulf. They are objective—that is, they describe scenes and create characters external to themselves : while she is subjective—that is, almost everything she writes is related not merely artistically but vitally to herself, and has in some sense been lived over by her. George Eliot is to a certain extent in the same category as Charlotte Brontë, but so wide is her range that the portion of the work of which this can be affirmed appears but small in comparison with that which lies outside of

Charlotte's sphere: she cannot, therefore, be regarded as the especial representative of subjective passion. There is also strong evidence of a desire to make her fictions operate upon the world, and contribute to its amelioration, a feeling entirely absent from Charlotte Brontë, as it must be from every purely subjective writer. I do not think that George Eliot has carried it to any inartistic length: but this is more than can be said of the next distinguished novelist upon our list, Charles Kingsley. Kingsley's earliest novels are written to recommend the ideas of Christian socialism: his *Hypatia* and *Two Years Ago* are manifestos of Broad Church theology; *Westward Ho!* endeavours the revival of the age of Elizabeth. All approach perilously near the region of the tract: but all are saved by the writer's energy and marvellous gift of picturesque description, as well as the fine moral tone and the translation of the ideas of Carlyle into ordinary speech. They have this much in common with Charlotte Brontë's novels that they are works of intense passion, but hers is the passion of an individual and his the enthusiasm of humanity. A novelist of equal genius, but who appears at first sight at the opposite pole from Kingsley—Disraeli—resembles him in the extent to which he writes with a direct purpose. Long before Charlotte Brontë's time *Vivian Grey* had been written to satirize the politics of the day, and

point out the possibility of the formation of a new party: and *Contarini Fleming* to idealize Disraeli himself in the character of poet, to which he then sincerely thought he had a claim. During the period of Charlotte's literary activity Disraeli produced three novels with the most unmistakable political purpose, and therefore not touching at all upon her peculiar domain. *Contarini Fleming* in some measure does so, and the contrast of method is instructive. We see Charlotte representing the heroines who impersonate her conception of herself in the simplest manner, with the least possible diversity of circumstances from her own; in a word, painting herself as she really was. Disraeli, on the contrary, envelops his childhood with picturesqueness and magnificence, places himself in ideal surroundings and in an ideal atmosphere, and, while not unfaithful to his own conception of his own character, makes his environment not what it was, but what he would have wished it to have been. This fundamental difference of method places even his subjective work in quite a different category from Charlotte Brontë's. Borrow presents a curious combination of objective and subjective tendencies. No writer can possibly be more vivid in description, or more interested in things external to himself: on the other hand his works are pervaded by his own personality, and, while most graphic in depicting

salient traits of character, he gives us no whole man except himself. In both these characteristics he differs from Charlotte Brontë, upon whom he can have exerted no influence. There remain two authors of singular versatility, Bulwer and Mrs. Gaskell. Bulwer's passion was literary fame ; in pursuit of this he accommodates himself with unrivalled dexterity to the taste of the day, but you never can be sure of having his real mind, unless perhaps when his novels turn upon occult studies. He cannot, therefore, be compared with Charlotte Brontë. The last great novelist on our list, Mrs. Gaskell, not the least of whose titles to fame is her admirable and classical biography of her heroine Charlotte, was, like Bulwer, though from different motives, so versatile, that it is hard to say where the real manifestation of her individuality is to be found. All her books are masterly, but no two are alike. It is difficult, therefore, to parallel her with an authoress so thoroughly self-consistent as Charlotte Brontë.

This hasty and imperfect review of the characteristics of the chief writers of Charlotte Brontë's period who have any claim to be accounted her rivals should at all events suffice to establish that she occupies a niche of her own, and cannot be classified with any of them. This is enough to rescue her from the charge of provincialism. She is not merely the representative of a particular district, but occupies a

place in the great Pantheon of English literature which but for her would have remained unfilled. If I were now writing a history of English literature it would be needful to define this place, and vindicate by examples her right to hold it. This is unnecessary on the present occasion, when I am addressing an audience well read in her writings and patriotically interested in them, and which has, moreover, frequently had the advantage of hearing them discussed by critics of eminence. We may assume as generally admitted that the predominant characteristic of Charlotte Brontë's writings is Passion—whether the passion of love or the passion of hate, or local or patriotic enthusiasm, or any other by which her intense and indomitable nature might at the time be actuated. None of her contemporaries are open to the impressions of powerful feeling in an equal degree, and none are so exclusively possessed by them. Her sphere, therefore, while it has many points of contact with theirs, especially with George Eliot's, is nevertheless dissimilar. This is to say that she is original, and indeed I can hardly think of any writer of her day, except Borrow and Browning, of whom absolute originality can be so unequivocally predicated. A considerable affinity to Byron may be traced. Like him she possessed

> a fount of fiery life
> Which served for a Titanic strife.

But while Byron marred splendid work by frequent affectation and insincerity, nothing is more characteristic of Charlotte Brontë than her absolute truthfulness. Some of her pictures, especially of the schools where she was pupil and teacher, have been taxed with inaccuracy. This may be the fact, but none can doubt that she described them as they appeared to herself. She would not for the world have debased her art to a manufacture, or put pen to paper in the absence of a definite call. Once, indeed, she was prevailed upon to lengthen by an episode a novel which had fallen short of the regular three-volume quantum, but the episode is one of the best things in the book. As this austere conscientiousness is one of her glories, so it is correlated with her principal shortcoming, not a shortcoming which in any way detracts from the merits of the novels which she has given us, but one which prevented her from giving us many more. She is deficient in invention and creative imagination: she can only speak of what she has realized by her personal experience. Hence all three novels are mainly autobiographical. She is indeed fully capable of drawing portraits of persons external and even distasteful to herself with startling effect, witness the wonderful picture of Madame Beck in *Villette*, but they must be people she has known, and who have come within her own sphere. She cannot create a character by sheer

force of imagination, nor can she devise a set of circumstances out of which to construct a story. The consequence was a great limitation in her powers of production. She had by no means worn her mind out, but she had exhausted her material; and as she would not condescend with many another novelist to use the old material over again, it is probable that even if her life had been prolonged she would have written little more. If, like George Sand, while retaining unimpaired the passion which first set her pen in motion, she had been able to devise an endless series of novel scenes and incidents, she might, with life and health, have filled a prodigious place in our literature. As it is, her praise must be the reverse to have produced a greater effect than almost any other novelist whose production is limited to three books.

It is not easy to speak of Currer Bell without naming Ellis and Acton. Anne Brontë lives by her sisters; a single lyric reveals the poetess. Some distinguished critics have preferred Emily to Charlotte. I should deprecate the comparison: their genius and their spheres are dissimilar. Charlotte is not a poet, and Emily is not an artist. The apology for the savage repulsiveness, tempered by the deepest tenderness, of her *Wuthering Heights* is that save in form it is a lyric, a work of poetical inspiration. It came to her, she did not plan or scheme it.

The same is true of her better poems, especially of her masterpiece, the lines beginning, "No coward soul is mine," one of the very few examples of the sublime in English poetry of the Victorian era, and in intensity of feeling and magnificence of expression surpassing every other lyric of an English poetess. Had she lived and had this inspiration continued to be vouchsafed to her, whether in prose or verse, her place must have been high indeed. But it was fitful and capricious, independent of her own will, and might never have revisited her. In any case, neither with it nor without it, would she have emulated the more disciplined genius of her sister, any more than the latter would have rivalled her as a poetess.

I am about to conclude my discourse by reading an anecdote of Charlotte Brontë from a book which, being privately printed, is probably unknown to you, supplemented by some reflections and reminiscences by the writer, a man of the most delightful nature and the highest culture. He is the late William Johnson Cory, dear to some few as a poet, appreciated by still fewer as an historian, though without a rival in pregnancy and conciseness ; the most efficient Eton master of his day and the best modern writer of Latin verse ; the reformer of King's College, Cambridge, in conjunction with Henry Bradshaw ; and who nevertheless, with all

BRONTË WATERFALL, HAWORTH MOOR.

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these titles to distinction, has remained almost unknown. I will endeavour to make him known here as an admirer of Charlotte Brontë. He says in the privately printed book to which I have alluded, the *Extracts from his Letters and Journals*, printed after his death, describing a visit paid to Haworth in 1867 :—

> Went to Haworth with the three Butlers. Glad to find Arthur Butler thinking as I do about *Shirley*, the best of books. They told me what Richmond told them about Charlotte Brontë's portrait. She was very shy, and for two sittings he was out of hope ; but the third time she met the Duke of Wellington's servant leaving the house, which made Richmond say, "If you had been here a quarter of an hour sooner you would have seen the Duke of Wellington." Whereupon she broke out into eager asking about the Duke ; and so the painter caught the eager expression given in his portrait, of which I bought a photograph in Keighley. When Richmond was getting on well with the portrait she stood behind him looking at it : he heard a sob—she said, "Excuse me—it is so like my sister Emily."

Mr. Cory visited the parsonage, which he describes as a miserable homestead, and he adds :—

> Out of that prison the little Charlotte put forth a hand to feel for the world of human emotion, I wish she would come back to us, and count up the myriads to whom she has given new souls.
>
> Now I remember reading *Jane Eyre* straight through at a sitting in my home drawing-room, and again on the black,

gnarled wreathed rocks of Bude (1850) where there was a lowering stormcloud and a sunset on a distant sail, and a hollow roar in the reefs, and the reading broken off by a queer rattle of shingle which turned out to be a sheep fallen from the cliff: the last summer holidays spent with my mother.

There is a peculiar propriety in Mr. Cory's record of his having read *Jane Eyre* upon the cliffs at Bude, for you will remember that Charlotte Brontë's mother was a Cornish woman. I do not think, however, that her Cornish ancestors were, like her father's family, Celtic. Much of her genius may be traced with probability to the happy mixture of blood, connected with the environment of her youth, peculiar, independent, original, but much less rough than Mrs. Gaskell made it out to be. I will not suppress Mr. Cory's pretty compliment to the fair sex of these parts. "The women," he says, "talk most musically." When he speaks of having read *Jane Eyre* straight through at a sitting, we must conclude that he had the day before him when he began. This is not quite my experience. When I first read *Jane Eyre* my days were given to official work, and I could read only in the evening. I remember how the book kept me up to two o'clock in the morning, and how I closed it at the end of that thrilling passage where Jane proves to Mr. Rochester that an evil thing has really been near her by showing him

that her veil has been torn from the top to the bottom. Fame might be founded on this incident alone : but it is a stronger proof of Charlotte's genius that her work and life as a whole should be able to awaken intense interest in readers so cultured and refined, so tender and manly and sweet-natured as Mr. Cory's letters and journals show him to have been.

Will she retain this power? I think so. It is a remark of Aubrey, writing three quarters of a century after Shakespeare, that Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries, frequently preferred to him in his own age, are already out of date because they merely depict contemporary manners, while Shakespeare depicts universal manners. This is just what Charlotte Brontë does in her far more limited sphere ; she gives us the emotions which will be always true, always living, and her work owes little or nothing to the merely accidental and temporary. Works which reproduce "the very form and pressure of the time," and deal with the questions, momentous as these may be, which principally interest the time, are inevitably doomed to dwindle in attractiveness—although, if true works of genius, they cannot die—until their abiding worth comes to be mainly historical. They may in this stage be compared to fossils, the imposing skeletons of grand and gigantic creatures whose softer parts have undergone decomposition : while the simply subjective

romance, derived from a source of perennial feeling, reaches posterity like the pebble, which the everlasting roll of Time's ocean has only served to polish.

CHARLOTTE & EMILY BRONTË: A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

By Prof. C. E. VAUGHAN, M.A.

An Address delivered to the Brontë Society at Keighley, on January 20, 1912.

CHARLOTTE AND EMILY BRONTË: A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

I HAVE called my lecture this evening "Charlotte and Emily Brontë: a Comparison and a Contrast." I shall make no attempt to keep the bounds between the comparison and the contrast scrupulously exact. In the main, however, I shall begin by indicating what I conceive to be the points of resemblance between the sisters; and in the main, I shall devote the latter part of the lecture to those points of contrast between them which can hardly fail to strike us. With this saving condition, let us pass at once to some points of resemblance which suggest themselves at the first glance.

Both sisters—we shall feel this the moment we enter on a serious study of their writings—both sisters strike the note of passion. And I think we shall never do complete justice to their genius unless we bear in mind that they were among the first English novelists to do so. Think of the great names among the novelists who had gone before. Think of Fielding and

of Sterne. Think of Miss Burney and Miss Austen. Think of the utter lack of passion in the whole generation of Early Victorian novelists, until Charlotte and Emily Brontë appeared. Think, above all, of the two novelists who were at the height of their fame when the sisters published their first works, Thackeray and Dickens. Then, and then only, you will see what an enormous service they rendered to the novel in this country by striking this note of passion ; and striking it with a depth and clearness that has seldom been equalled, and still more seldom, if ever, surpassed.

In order to do justice to their precursors, one has indeed to remember that among them were two men who came near to forestalling the Brontës in this matter ; and that these two men are among the greatest. They are Richardson and Scott. In *Clarissa* you will hear something not far removed from the note of passion. It would be a gross injustice to deny it. Yet, after all, the fate of Clarissa, great as is the power with which it is brought before us, is rather the fate of passive suffering than the fate of a woman under the spell and doom of passion. She is the victim of wrongs done by others. She has not the will and the sweep of energy that we associate with passion. In the *Bride of Lammermoor*, again you have something that yet more nearly approaches what I

THE RYDINGS, BIRSTALL.
Thornfield Hall of *Jane Eyre*.

OAKWELL HALL, BIRSTALL.
Fieldhead of *Shirley*.

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should call the unmistakable note of passion. But, even there, you will find a difference which it is not well to overlook. Scott, as you might have expected from his nature and genius, confines himself entirely to action. In him there is nothing of that subtle analysis, that power of tracing the inmost workings of the soul, which is conspicuous in the Brontës, particularly in Charlotte. There we see, we follow step by step, the growth and swell of passion, its conflict with the abiding instincts of the soul. We watch the storm sweep over the very being of the hero or heroine and rush them to suffering and despair. In Scott all, or some, of this may perhaps be implied. It may, if the imagination of the reader be keen and observant, without much difficulty be possibly inferred. But it is certainly not in the picture which he actually paints. It is not in the story as he tells it. With the Brontës, on the other hand, at any rate with Charlotte, it forms the theme of the whole work. And what writer, I would like to know—what writer, at any rate in our own country—can be compared with them for supreme mastery of this inner note of passion?

Then again, there is in both sisters what I think we should all agree to call the lyric cry. But it takes a different form in each. In Emily Brontë it is diffused through the whole story. In Charlotte, it gathers itself together in one

or two magnificent scenes. Emily, no doubt, sometimes allows it to flash upon us in a single phrase, a single image, or chain of images, as in those where the heroine of *Wuthering Heights* paints her identity of soul with Heathcliff. The passage will be in the memory of many of us, but there can be no harm in repeating it : "I love him . . . because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same : and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods : time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath : a source of little visible delight, but necessary. I *am* Heathcliff ! he's always, always in my mind : not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being."

Still, such passages are rare. And in Emily Brontë the lyric note is more commonly to be heard as an undertone than as a melody. With Charlotte, it is exactly the reverse. And when we think of the lyric cry in her, we think, I suppose, first and foremost, of two or three great scenes : the scene, for instance, in which, when her marriage has been dashed into pieces before her eyes, Jane Eyre shuts herself in her room and fights out her duty with herself and

God alone; the scene where, like a hunted hare, she takes refuge upon the summer moor; the scene where, months afterwards, when her faith wavers and she is about to yield to the insistence of her unworthy suitor, the voice of Rochester suddenly thrills upon her ear, calling "Jane! Jane!" we again recall, largely, the rapture of Louis Moore as he looks out upon the wind-swept radiance of the moon, or the lyric passion which reigns through the closing pages of *Villette*—surely amongst the most magnificent prose lyrics ever conceived by the imagination of a poet.[1]

Then again, common to both sisters is what I would call the cry of revolt. And that, like the two qualities of which I have already spoken, was, so far as the novel is concerned, a new thing in the literature of England. Yet here again, between the two the difference is very marked. Emily is a rebel so convinced that it never enters her mind to argue about the matter. She takes revolt for granted, and there is no more to be said. Charlotte, on the other hand—perhaps less sure of her ground, certainly less extreme in her conclusions—stands by us at every step to justify and explain it. Emily tacitly assumes a world in which Society with its

[1] Time forbade me to say anything of the Brontë Poems. I deeply regret this, as it inevitably results in an injustice to Emily.

conventions is nothing, in which the individual, the passionate individual, stands alone, unquestioning and unquestioned. That, I think, is the conception we can hardly fail to recognize throughout the whole of *Wuthering Heights*. Turn to *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*, and you will find something curiously different. There we have the rebel in the very torrent and tempest of revolt. Be it Rochester or Jane Eyre, be it Lucy Snowe or Paul Emanuel, they are brought before us in the very act of tearing down the conventions, of breaking through the barriers, which public opinion—the opinion of the sluggish and the timorous—has set up. And the writer exults in showing us how those barriers give way before that strong will; how nothing—nothing but the counteraction of the same will—can check hero or heroine in the fulfilment of their purpose.

It has sometimes been denied that we can speak of either sister—and in particular of Charlotte—as being in revolt against the conventions of Society. I must say that, to my mind, that denial rests upon a very curious misapprehension. It is, I think, impossible to deny that they are both in revolt against the conventions of Society unless, in a very arbitrary way, you limit those conventions down to one—to the marriage law. Against the marriage law it is, of course, perfectly true that Charlotte, at any rate, is in no sense

in revolt. The whole scheme of *Jane Eyre*, its central idea, would rise in protest against any such belief as that. But surely it is a delusion, and a very dull delusion, to say that, unless it be against the marriage law, nothing shall count with us for revolt. It is, I suppose, nothing but the example of the French novel that has led us to put such a strangely narrow construction upon the term "revolt." And it seems to me abundantly clear that when we throw aside all such arbitrary and accidental interpretations, both sisters are, and it is the glory of both sisters to have been, eternal rebels. Both are fired by the conviction that the individual is here, that each soul is here on earth, not to follow the prescriptions and the rules laid down for it by others, but to obey the best promptings of its own nature, and, when they clearly point in one direction, entirely to disregard all the traditional barriers, all the human conventions, that would drive it in another. And it is the force with which both of them gave utterance to that conviction, the imaginative genius with which they clothed it, that is one of the chief glories of the Brontës.

I need not waste words in proving this of Emily. But do you remember some very striking words that Charlotte wrote to her friend, Mr. Williams, one of the firm who published for her? They are as follows: "If you knew

the dreams that absorb me, the fiery imagination that at times eats me up and makes me feel Society as it exists wretchedly insipid, then you would pity and, I dare say, despise me." Let us hope that Mr. Williams neither pitied nor despised her. There was certainly no need. But I will ask you—with these words in your ear, with all that corresponds to them in the novels present to your mind—can you doubt for a moment that among the faiths which lay nearest to the heart of Charlotte Brontë—as it was also among those which fired the imagination of Emily—was the faith that under certain circumstances—circumstances which at one time or other are bound to confront the life of each one of us—rebellion against the established code is the first duty, revolt against the tyranny of social custom the one thing needful ? It may be a right faith, or a wrong faith. For myself, I believe that, in the main, it is a right one. But that it was the faith of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, I have no doubt whatsoever.

Up to this moment I have been speaking of what may seem to be rather abstract matters. And there has been little, perhaps too little, to remind you that these two great women were, above all, great imaginative writers, great novelists and great artists. That being so, it is only what we should expect when we find that all these characteristics of which I have

been speaking to you hitherto are summed up and gathered together, and crystallized, in the characters which move through the pages of their stories. The note of passion, the lyric cry, the cry of revolt—all these are embodied, are they not ? in the figures of Catherine and Heathcliff, of Rochester and Jane Eyre, of Lucy Snowe and Paul Emanuel. They are so again, though certainly under a less marked and obvious form, in the figure of Shirley. And it is the greatness of these two writers that there is nothing vague or abstract about their creations ; that everything did present itself to them in a concrete shape ; that all these ideas, instincts, convictions which were surging through their minds—all could be, and all were, embodied by them in figures of flesh and blood.

So far as this applies to Emily Brontë, I think the statement justifies itself. No one surely can read *Wuthering Heights* without admitting it on the spot. It is none the less true of the finest work of Charlotte. It is true at any rate of *Jane Eyre*, and it is true of *Villette*. There, too, it is no abstract thing with which we are concerned. There, too, it is round the central figures of her story that the whole of our interest is gathered.

Think for a moment how new and how original was the conception at the time when it was first flashed upon this world. Think

what would have been the effect if the imaginary characters of whom we have been speaking had suddenly, in very flesh and blood, been shown into an Early Victorian drawing-room. I imagine that the horsehair chairs and sofas would at once have disjointed themselves, that the walls would have been shattered in pieces and the ceilings, with all their prismatic pendants, have flown to the four quarters of the sky. They are figures of a larger build and of a bigger make, they are souls of more fire and energy than those to which the men and women of that day were accustomed. And this again is one of the glories of the Brontës. Here again, here above all, they throw all convention to the winds. They refuse to follow the beaten track of fashion and prescription, to paint men and women as dwarfed and mangled by social pressure and tradition. They have courage to present human nature, not as they were told to present it, not as they were taught to conceive it, not even as experience, their own very limited experience, might have led them to suppose it ; but as they knew it—I would rather say, as they divined it—in their own heart, their own imagination, their own unconquerable will.

This courage is splendid in itself. It is still more precious in its imaginative results. For as we read, we feel that a breath from the outer

world, a breeze from the moors and the eternal hills, is sweeping over us; we know that a new vigour and a new force has come into our lives, or might come if we were only wise enough to make it our own. I reckon this one of the greatest services a writer can render to the world.

But, as you are well aware, it is just this pronounced conception of character which has called down the thunder of the critics. It gave great offence in certain quarters at the time; it has continued to do so ever since. The critics, even the friendly critics, were disposed to find great fault with Charlotte Brontë for painting character in this fashion. George Henry Lewes, for instance, who ought to have known better, took her roundly to task on this account. "Why," he asked in effect, "why do you go outside all the limits of your own experience? why do you insist on creating men and women out of your own heart and your own soul? why do you not follow in the steps of that great woman, Miss Austen? why don't you observe the wise precepts which beam from her mild eyes?"

Incidentally, I may say that the last phrase seems to me one of the worst judged, the most misleading, I have ever read. Have you ever seen a portrait of Miss Austen? Have you ever looked into those "mild eyes"? If you have,

you will have seen the most cutting pair of eyes ever created. I can assure you that, when I look at them, I am left to wonder how it was that any man, woman, or child ever ventured to open their lips in the owner's presence. So much for the mildness of Miss Austen's eyes, and the sharpness of Mr. Lewes's.

Well, Charlotte Brontë, as might have been predicted, would have none of such preposterous, such impertinent advice. She roundly declared that every author has not only the right, but the duty, to follow the bent of his own genius ; and she hinted pretty plainly that, in her own conviction, however much she might be inferior to Miss Austen in observation, in delicacy of touch, in the artist's power of adapting means to ends, yet in imagination, in poetry, in all the higher and deeper qualities of genius, the positions were reversed. And however deeply we may admire Miss Austen—within her own limits it is impossible to admire her too deeply or too warmly—can we doubt that Charlotte Brontë was in the right ?

Here are two paragraphs from the letter in which she thrust the well-meant patronage of George Lewes indignantly aside :—

" Imagination is a strong, restless faculty which claims to be heard and exercised. Are we to be quite deaf to her cry and insensate to her struggles ? When she shows us bright

pictures, are we never to look at them, or try to reproduce them? And when she is eloquent and speaks rapidly and urgently in our ear, are we not to write to her dictation? . . . When authors write best, or at least when they write most fluently, an influence seems to waken in them which becomes their master; which will have its own way; putting out of view all behests but its own, dictating certain words and insisting on their being used, whether vehement or measured in their nature; new-moulding characters, giving unthought-of turns to incidents, rejecting carefully elaborated old ideas, and suddenly creating and adopting new ones."

In yet another letter to Mr. Williams, she sums up the whole matter in a dozen words: "I must have my own way in the matter of writing." That, I think, is the last word upon the subject. It is, it ought to be, the last word from the side of the author. It ought to be, if it is not, the last word to the conscience of the critic. Genius has its own law, and is bound to follow it—that is the first principle on which the author ought to act; it is the first principle by which the critic ought to judge. And it was because Charlotte Brontë had the courage of her own convictions, because she was resolved that nothing should make her turn aside from the dictates of her own genius that she has cast, and has deserved to cast, so strong

a spell upon the heart and the imagination of her readers. From Emily we have no such declaration. Her portion, during her short life as an author, was not criticism, but neglect. Yet had she been challenged on the subject, had she received the same stupid advice as that inflicted on her sister, we all know how she would have met it. At the first breath, she would have brushed it aside with a gesture still more contemptuous than Charlotte's.

I have said that this complaint against Charlotte—the complaint is, if you please, that she was too original—is sometimes renewed in our own day. Once more the critics are there to tell us that she ought to have followed, that she ought to have anticipated, such or such models in her craft; that she ought to have treated her theme like Richardson, that she ought to have treated it like Balzac; that she ought to have pointed the way to Gustave Flaubert, that she ought to have pointed it to Meredith. Now I must decline to stand by while a great writer is thus draped in the white sheet. Once start upon this crooked path, once adopt a notion so crude as that one writer should take another for his model, and heaven only knows where you are going to stop. You will find yourself driven to ask Milton, "Why did you not follow Shakespeare?" or Heine, "Why do you not follow Goethe?" or Boccaccio, "Why do

you not follow Dante?" And then, when you have got to the end of your list, I see no reason why you should not begin it again, by the simple process of turning the tables upon Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, and as many other authors as your memory, on the spur of the moment, may supply. The whole thing rests, in fact, upon an absolute misconception—I would rather say, a fatal ignorance—of the very first principles upon which both authorship and criticism are based.

The first thing the critic has to make up his mind to is that genius is its own law. And if he makes bold to tell a man or woman of genius that they are to follow rules and copy models, he not only makes himself ridiculous—that may be a small loss, it may easily be a positive gain—but, unless he can count upon resistance as steadfast as that of the Brontës, he runs the risk of being listened to and of throttling genius at its birth. It is fortunate for us that Charlotte Brontë had the wisdom and firmness to thrust aside all such impertinent suggestions and to trust her own genius against the world.

It is, of course, perfectly true that, writing as she did out of her own genius and her own soul, she was sometimes betrayed into unfortunate mistakes. But that was only when she strayed into a field that was not hers, and essayed a task for which her own genius did not fit her. Thus, when she set herself, as she did in *Jane Eyre*, to

paint the manners of smart Society—the manners of what Horace Walpole called the "great vulgar"—she painted something which was not in the least like the original and, so far, must be admitted to have failed. Fortunately, this is but one short episode in the book, and the core of the novel remains entirely untouched. The critic, however, is equal to the occasion. He catches hold of that one episode, he sees nothing but that single blemish, and cheerily pronounces that the genius which could have been guilty of such an error must have been radically unsound. What may be the nature of such a critic's genius, I will refrain from asking. I would really rather not.

Seeing that so much has been made of this particular error, I would wish, if I may, to say a word by way of defence. I cannot, and will not, say that I do not consider it an error. But I will say that I hold it to have been magnified beyond all reason; and I think there may be some instruction in tracing it to its source.

In judging, as she clearly did judge, the tone, the fashions and many of the personages of what we call high society to be inherently vulgar, Charlotte Brontë was certainly in the right. But when she came to paint these things, she made the rather fatal mistake of painting the wrong sort of vulgarity; of attributing to them a

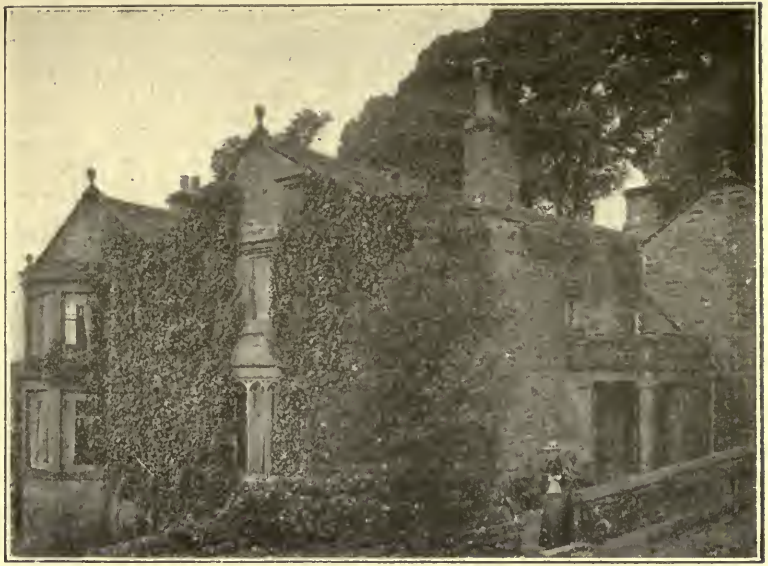
vulgarity which may be better or worse than what you actually find in them, but which, whether better or worse, is certainly of a very different kind. However, even the mistakes of a great writer often throw an instructive light upon its genius. And this particular error brings us back once more to the fact that, among her many other qualities, Charlotte Brontë was essentially a novelist of revolt.

In painting the high society, the county families of *Jane Eyre*, I suppose there was a certain ferment of personal mortification working in her mind. She was, so to speak, taking vengeance for the humiliations she had passed through during the months in which she acted as governess in families of pretension. And perhaps there is a little too much of that spice of personal pique to be altogether pleasant. I think there is. But it is very characteristic that she should have taken hold of that part of her experience and have worked it into her novel in this way. It shows on the one hand that, keen as she was to observe, her observation was too much at the mercy of her personal feelings, above all of her antipathies. And if one instance of this is not enough, we may cite her handling of Mr. Brocklehurst in *Jane Eyre*, and of the curates in *Shirley*, as a second and a third. It proves on the other hand, if further proof were needed, how wrong-headed was the advice of

Lewes when he strove to bind her down to observation, for which her talent was so limited and uncertain, and to frighten her away from the work of creation in which she has seldom been approached.

Yet the very defect, of which this is an instance, is only the other side of a quality which lies at the very heart and centre of her genius. Figures like Blanche Ingram may be mere parodies of what they were meant to be. But at least they faithfully represent the feelings of the woman who had chafed under the vulgar contempt of those who thought themselves her betters, but who, for all who had eyes to see, were immeasurably beneath her. They may be false as portraits of others. But, in a sense which you will readily catch, they are a true reflection of Charlotte Brontë herself, and of the type of woman she best loved to take as heroine of her tales. And the creation of that type, let us never forget it, was among her most marked and original contributions to the novel of her day and country.

Charlotte Brontë, I suppose, was the first English novelist to bring upon the stage a figure long familiar to the French novelist, the *femme incomprise*, the misunderstood woman; the woman who has great thoughts in her soul, who is capable of great deeds and of deep sympathies, but who, for one reason or another, meets with



MOORSEATS, NEAR HATHERSAGE.
Moor House of *Jane Eyre*

To face p. 192.

little but scorn and neglect from the world and those who slavishly accept the judgments of the world. We know that Charlotte had strong feelings on this matter. We know that she reproached her sisters with clinging to the old tradition that the heroine of a novel is necessarily born with beauty and all kinds of feminine attractions. I will take, she said, a heroine who has no looks and no attraction, and I will show that she can be made as interesting, as full of charm, as any doll in the nursery of fiction. And one almost hears Charlotte, as she writes, saying to herself, or rather speaking through the lips of her heroine to her own employers of the past: "I am little and puny, and insignificant in comparison with you. Quite true; in the body I cut a very poor figure by your side. But, if you could look within, you would find a spirit, before which yours would shrivel like a parched scroll, and you would know that I dwell habitually in regions where you dare not soar, not even for an instant." There is all that—is there not?—in the mood and temper which is stamped so strongly on *Jane Eyre*, but which, it is well to remember, fades out of her later novels—those written when her character had softened and her genius mellowed. You will find little of it in *Shirley*, some stray touches to the contrary; you will find still less of it in *Villette*.

So far, I have dealt mainly with the qualities which the two sisters have in common. I now pass to speak very shortly of the points in which they differ. And first and foremost, it is, I suppose, clear to all of us that of the two, the spirit of Emily is, beyond doubt, the more intense. This is her great glory. I know of nothing in the English novel so intense, so absolutely the spontaneous creation of a strong and fiery spirit, as the characters of Catherine and Heathcliff. It is futile to say that nothing like them has ever been seen, or ever will be seen, upon the earth. How do we know? It is far more probable that beings, who under favouring conditions might have grown to something of their form and stature, have existed, now and again, from the beginning, and will continue to do so till the end. All that Emily has done is to supply such conditions and let them work their will upon natures who, without them, would have remained the starved and stunted creatures that are within the experience of us all. This is the privilege of the creative artist; the method by which the supreme poets have achieved some of the greatest of their triumphs—the method by which Milton created Satan: and Æschylus, Clytemnestra, and Victor Hugo, Gilliatt or Jean Valjean. Emily Brontë is not on the same scale as these great figures, but she may claim the same defence.

Emily, then, is more intense in spirit than her sister, but, after all, Charlotte follows not very far behind. We will not look beyond the English novel; and in the English novel, where will you find anything comparable, in this matter, to *Wuthering Heights*, unless in such figures as Jane Eyre and Rochester, as Paul Emanuel and Paulina? For myself, I should wish to add Shirley and, in her inspired moments, Lucy Snowe also to the list. In all these there is a softened echo—and the echo is not so soft either—of the cry that rings from Catherine and Heathcliff. The difference is one not of kind but of degree. The two sisters inhabit the same world, though they may dwell in different regions of it; they have the freedom of the same city, though their homes may be in different quarters. It is the difference not between the vegetation of the temperate zone and that of the tropics, but between the vegetation immediately under the equator and that of a degree or two farther north or a degree or two farther south.

And I dwell upon this because I think that Charlotte has often perhaps hardly had justice done to her in the matter. She invites, she challenges comparison with her sister; and on that comparison every man with eyes in his head must admit that, in this particular point, Emily is the stronger; I will not say far stronger, but yet stronger and yet more intense.

I take a second point : There is, I think, a very marked contrast, a very clear distinction, between the ways in which the two sisters worked upon their materials, in which they went about to create the various characters of their stories. Emily created purely and simply out of her own soul and her own genius. Observation counted for nothing at all ; it is the spontaneous outflow of her genius, or it is nothing. Now with Charlotte, although there are obvious affinities to this process, still there is no less obvious difference. One gathers—and I think the evidence is pretty clear upon the point—that she was most at her ease when she could take the first hint from some one she had seen ; from some man or woman with whom she had been brought into contact, if only for a moment ; from some human being on whom her eye had actually rested. The most marked instance of this—and it is absolutely authentic—is her creation of the character of Helston, the "old Cossack" who rules the roost in *Shirley*. She tells us herself that she saw the old Cossack once only with her bodily eyes when she was at the mature age of ten. As it was at the consecration of a church, he can hardly then, I imagine, have been performing Cossack duties. But the curve of his nose and the eagle glance of his eye struck home at once to her imagination ; and out of that fleeting vision, a vision that can hardly have

lasted for more than—well, sermons were long in those days, shall we say two hours?—she constructed that extraordinarily vivid character, that masterpiece of a clerical dragoon: and all this, close on thirty years after she had seen him.

So again we are told, and it certainly seems probable, that the greatest of all her triumphs, Paul Emanuel in *Villette*, is wrought out of hints—hints faint and fugitive in the extreme—drawn from her old instructor in Brussels, M. Heger. That would seem to be almost beyond doubt. But, if I had met M. Heger, I am perfectly certain that I at any rate should not have seen, and I greatly doubt whether a single soul but Charlotte Brontë would have seen, the amazing combination of qualities which make Monsieur Paul one of the most striking and surely quite the most lovable, of all the characters in English fiction; and all this, remember, was the pure act of the genius of Charlotte, working upon materials which in amount were absolutely beggarly and which to no eye but hers would have meant anything at all.

To start from a hint of experience or observation, to let her own instincts freely work upon it, her own imagination transform it out of all knowledge—this, then, was the distinctive method of Charlotte Brontë, the peculiar channel along which her genius most naturally flowed. The

most pathetic instance of this, I think, is to be found in the character of Shirley. You will all remember that. She took her sister Emily and created out of her, not what Emily was in her brief life of sorrow and suffering and anguish, but what she might have been, what she would have been if her circumstances had been less grievous, if an ampler atmosphere had been around her, if there had been some gleams of sunshine to break the almost unrelieved gloom and sadness of her days. That surely is very beautiful. And what monument to the great spirit who had been snatched from her side could have been nobler than this tribute, this vision of what might have been, that Charlotte thus laid upon her grave?

I take one other point which can hardly fail to suggest itself to us, as we consider the work of the two sisters. In width of genius, in extent and range of powers, I think it must be admitted that Charlotte was the richer of the two. This, I think, is partly because, as we have just seen, observation enters far more largely into her work than into Emily's. And, when used as her genius prompted her to use it, when used not as a limit imposed from without, but as a suggestion to set her imagination working from within, this gave a variety and richness to her creations, a command of many different types of character, which apparently was denied to Emily, and which

I doubt whether Emily would have taken even at a gift.

But, closely connected with this, there is another gift which, above all others, went to widen the range of Charlotte. I mean the gift of humour. In her latest work at any rate, in *Villette*, she showed herself to possess a fund of humour, of which her earlier books had offered comparatively little promise, of which there is no trace in the solitary work of Emily, and to which I do not believe that Emily could ever have attained. You may say that Joseph Smith in *Wuthering Heights* is a humorous character. So he is, but surely not in the same rare and deep-reaching sense in which we say this of Paul Emanuel. The elements are in themselves coarser, and they are more coarsely mingled. There is nothing in him of the fire and radiance, nothing of the human kindliness and far-flashing tenderness which, by their weird contrasts, move us at once to tears and laughter in the masterpiece of Charlotte. And I can hardly conceive that Emily had it in her to create a character like this.

The little Professor in *Villette* is, no doubt, the supreme instance of Charlotte Brontë's humour. But he is by no means the only one. The character of Hortense Moore, in the early part of *Shirley*, is unfortunately little more than a sketch. But, sketch though it be, it is full

of humour; humour of the genial kind, the kind that we associate with Fielding, and even with Shakespeare; or, to take a name less imposing, the kind in which Mrs. Gaskell, on her more modest scale, was mistress unsurpassed. And I shall never cease to regret that, after chalking that brilliant sketch in her opening pages, Charlotte should afterwards, for exigencies of her own, have allowed the kindly but rigid champion of all the domestic decencies to fade silently out of the story, and we see her no more.

I return, however, to the figure of Monsieur Paul, as one of the greatest triumphs which human genius, in this field, has ever won. Where, I should like to know, where shall we find anything that goes more swiftly and more deeply to the heart than the figure of this little man, that strange blending of reason and unreason, of strength and of sweetness, of wilfulness and self-abasement, of fury and of tenderness, who slowly works himself into our affections but, when once he has found his home there, will never again be surrendered, so long as we live?

Finally, one word must be said about the style of these two writers. And here again we are met with a curious, not to say a startling, contrast. The style of Emily, as we all know, is severely simple. Nothing could be more so. It is the rarest thing for her to allow herself an

image, a set picture, of any kind. Pictures there are in plenty which burn themselves upon the imagination. But you will find, I think, that they commonly do so in virtue of the sheer power and vividness with which the circumstances are conceived and rendered, that they commonly owe little to tone or colour, still less to any literary elaboration of style. So it is in the passage to which the Chairman [1] referred in his opening words : the passage describing the haunted dream of the man who tells the story, near the beginning of *Wuthering Heights*. So it is in a score of other passages, on which it would be a pleasure to linger, if time allowed. Once and again, however, Emily breaks through the rigid limits which she would seem habitually to have laid upon herself. And then at one stroke she shows herself a master. An image, perhaps a succession of images, is flashed upon our vision ; and the very austerity of the setting makes it all the more radiant and unforgettable. One instance of this is offered by the words of Catherine about Heathcliff, which I have already quoted. Another, and it is the last to which I will refer, is that which describes Heathcliff as he stands beneath the window of the woman he loved, waiting in motionless agony until her tortured spirit should at last be set free. The servant, you will remember, goes out and finds him there,

[1] Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe was Chairman at this meeting.

the strong man propped against a tree in the dripping rain ; and she knows he has been standing there like a stone for hours, because there were two ouzels flying backwards and forwards in front of him, gathering material for their nest, his presence making no more difference to them than if he had been a stock or bush, like the rest. That is a magnificent image, and it is one that none but a great poet could have conceived, none but a great stylist have cut and fashioned. It is, however, an exception, and, generally speaking, I am sure you will agree with me that the style of Emily is severely simple.

The style of Charlotte, on the other hand, I think it must be said, is anything but simple. She has, in fact, a strong vein—I do not use the word in any unpleasant sense—of literary rhetoric and, as you know, the critics have fastened upon this and have counted it for an unpardonable offence. For myself I must say that I think these objections are very finicking, and it seems to me that for some years past —I hope the blight is at last beginning to blow over—there has been a tendency to judge style by a false standard. The only qualities of style that some critics are prepared to recognize are such qualities as urbanity and plainness and simplicity. Now, I am not going to deny the merits of all these, but after all—and it comes back to the same train of thought which has

already confronted us in considering the Brontës' method of handling character—after all, steadiness, demureness, propriety may be very excellent qualities in a duenna, a governess, or a valet, but they are not exactly the qualities which I should be most anxious to find in a writer of genius, which I should be apt to consider the surest test of genius. Anyhow it is quite certain that Charlotte Brontë would have none of them. It is quite certain also, though I doubt whether this has been sufficiently recognized, that she was in no small measure under the spell of a very great figure in contemporary literature, the greatest writer of the time, the French poet, Victor Hugo.

Now, I will not deny that, with all his genius, Victor Hugo is in some ways a perilous model. I will not deny that, in following this model, Charlotte sometimes allowed herself to be betrayed into extravagance. But for all that, it remains true that Victor Hugo himself, in style as in all other qualities of the poet, was a Titan, and, although Charlotte may not have been his equal—I do not for a moment suppose she was his equal—still that in no way proves that she too, in style, as in many other points of supreme importance, was not a commanding figure, a spirit of genius. I am confident that she was, and in style, as in matters (if indeed there be such) yet more vital, this declares itself, as I must think,

beyond dispute. This is true, above all, of those passages where it is evident that she herself was deeply moved. Then all that betrays labour and effort, all that elsewhere wakes the suspicion that she is striving for effect, vanishes upon the instant and we hear the very music, the fiery melody of her soùl. I might appeal to a score of passages scattered through the pages of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, but I would recall to your memory as the crowning instance of it, the closing passage of *Villette*. You will remember the circumstances. The heroine has betrothed herself to Paul Emanuel, whom she passionately loves. Immediately after the betrothal, Emanuel has had to leave her on a self-denying errand of three years in the service of others, and at the moment when the book closes, the three long years of separation are at last over and Lucy is awaiting her lover's return. For the sake of explaining one allusion, I may remind you that the cry of the Banshee, the spirit that moves in the storm, has been heard once before by the heroine, at the very beginning of the story, and that on that occasion it had been the warning of an approaching death.

> The sun passes the equinox ; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere ; but—he is coming.
>
> Frosts appear at night ; November has sent his fogs in advance ; the wind takes its autumn moan ; but—he is coming.

The skies hang full and dark—a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God watch that sail! Oh! guard it!

The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—"keening" at every window! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long: wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong: by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm.

That storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks: it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace, be still! Oh! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it: till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!

That is a highly-wrought passage. I am not concerned to deny it. On the contrary, I insist on it and I exult in it. And I will tell you that, in the whole range of English prose, there are few passages which I would sooner have written than that. And I say this not only because the style, as a mere arrangement of words, is supremely beautiful; but also, and far more,

because it reflects, and reflects with the mastery that genius alone could give, that unforced, that mysterious, blending of sorrow and of triumph, which constitutes the very essence and spirit of great tragedy.

Neither in drama nor in novel do I know of anything which seems to me more accurately, more consummately, to reflect that spirit, as Milton for instance understood it, than the closing passage of *Villette*. In its whole tone and in its whole tenor, it reminds me of that blended cry of anguish and exultation which rings out at the end of his own supreme drama, *Samson Agonistes* :—

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame ; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Yes ; "calm of mind, all passion spent"—those are the words, the last words of Milton himself, which at once leap into our thoughts ; that is the tone, the deep organ tone, which peals upon our ears in the closing passage of *Villette*.

C. E. VAUGHAN.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN LONDON

By Sir SIDNEY LEE, D.Litt., LL.D.

An Address delivered to the Brontë Society, at Harrogate, on January 23, 1909.

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Yours sincerely
Smith

From the picture painted by G. F. Watts, R.A. in 1876.

To face p. 208.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN LONDON

For nearer forty than thirty years I have been a whole-hearted admirer of Charlotte Brontë's genius. I have a distinct memory of reading *Jane Eyre* as a boy. The weirdness of the mystery and the fiery glow of the language worked like magic on my youthful mind, and the impression has never faded from me.

Nor did my juvenile enthusiasm for Charlotte Brontë stop with her work. Mrs. Gaskell's sensitive pen taught me the grey pathos of the novelist's domestic distresses, which had a gloomy fascination for my early thought. In my young days, long before the Brontë Society was contemplated, I made a solitary pilgrimage to Haworth; I drained a glass to Charlotte Brontë's memory at the Black Bull Inn, sat there in the ill-starred Branwell's chair, and wandered in Charlotte Brontë's footsteps across the windy moor. I well remember how my interest was stimulated by reading on their first appearance Mr. Swinburne's impassioned "Note" and Sir Wemyss Reid's sober monograph, both of which came out

in 1877. I make no claim to have kept abreast of the vast sequel of critical and biographical literature which has since circled round Charlotte Brontë's head. I respect the untiring labours of recent explorers ; I have essayed no excavations on my own account. My old enthusiasm has been checked neither by independent research nor by close study of the ever-expanding commentary. Zeal, which is untutored by the new learning, may seem a poor credential for one who speaks to a band of learned disciples. In arrest of judgment on what may appear presumption, I offer two pleas of justification.

In the first place, I happen to be, for the time being, through the indulgence of my colleagues, the chairman of the Trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace at Stratford-on-Avon. Comparison between Shakespeare and Charlotte Brontë is profitless. I merely urge that Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust has in a very general sense an aim in common with the Brontë Society. Both institutions endeavour to keep alive national interest in all that survives of two homes of genius. The problem of genius is insoluble, and speculation has as yet failed to account for the miracle of its birth. It comes into being in most unexpected places, more often in the cottage than in the palace, more often in the house of the poor parson than in the mansion of the rich merchant. Its manifestations are rare and

mysterious. But with all emphasis should it be said that, at whatever hearth it take living shape, it is to the spiritual benefit of men and women to sanctify the place. It is good for every human being to recognize the obligation to reverence genius, and that sense of reverence will always be stimulated—at any rate in matter-of-fact minds, which are in the majority—by preserving haunts which genius has illumined. Haworth and Stratford-on-Avon may well be mentioned in the same breath, because the care locally bestowed on surviving memorials of their native heirs of genius draws visitors to both places from afar. The Brontë Society and the Trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace engage in cognate work, in the work of quickening the national reverence for inspired writers. I am glad of the opportunity of offering a greeting to the Guardians of the Brontë Museum from the Trustees at Stratford-on-Avon.

My second justificatory plea descends to a somewhat lower plane of argument. On March 31st next, fifty-four years will have passed away since Charlotte Brontë died.[1] The number of persons who saw her face to face is now small; her intimate associates are now dead. Those who can boast acquaintance with her at second hand, who have heard of her from her personal friends, are happily still numerous. Many beside

[1] Written January 23, 1909.

myself have learnt something of her from those who spoke with her and grasped her hand. But it was my good fortune to enjoy through great part of twenty years close relations with one who not merely presided over Charlotte Brontë's short feast of fame, but was the unconscious model of the most attractive of all the full-length portraits of men in her great gallery. Mr. George Smith, Charlotte Brontë's publisher, closed a long and honoured life nearly eight years ago. His publishing activities filled near six decades. Charlotte Brontë's friendly relations with him synchronized with the first decade only ; my relations belonged to the last two. An amply filled interval of thirty years and upwards divides the publication of *Jane Eyre* from the planning of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But Mr. Smith's powers of memory throughout his career were alert and vivid. In the comparatively recent period of my association with him, I gathered much from him of his early experience. Nor did his vigour know change or decay in his later years. In all essential features he was, I am persuaded, the same manly, keen-minded, sympathetic figure in my day as in Charlotte Brontë's. I therefore believe that I may without immodesty bring some personal knowledge and impressions of my own to bear on those classical episodes in the story of Charlotte Brontë's life and work

in which Mr. George Smith played a foremost part.

Another friend of mine who saw Charlotte Brontë and talked with her is the daughter of the great novelist, Thackeray. Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter, is still in all the vigour of a sympathetic personality, which speaks illuminatingly of her father's genius. Concerning the impressions which Charlotte Brontë gave and received when in London, I can cite testimony which I owe to two first-hand witnesses, Lady Ritchie and Mr. George Smith. There are no higher authorities on the topic. I have no secrets to divulge. In all its main features the story of Charlotte Brontë in London has often been told before. But it has features of perennial interest, and perhaps I may be able to tell it again in a somewhat differently refracted light.

Much has been written by Charlotte Brontë's biographers of her friendship with Mr. George Smith, her publisher. Less has been said of the place which that incident fills either in Mr. Smith's biography or in literary history. Yet, to take the last aspect first, it throws a very broad and healthy light on an important tract of literary territory. I have elsewhere styled Mr. Smith's association with Charlotte Brontë "a publishing idyll." It is rare that the epithet "idyllic" figures in the

joint chronicles of publishing and authorship. Publishers and authors are usually held to be linked together by no tie more sentimental than desire to make money out of one another. There are notable exceptions; but experience bears witness that few publishers and authors of eminence have throughout their working days been bound together in firm unbroken links of amity and trustfulness. It is a common failing on the part of publishers and authors to regard each other as mutual foes and preys. Yet the facts of Charlotte Brontë's connection with Mr. Smith, her publisher, show with convincing harmony that there is nothing in the nature of the publisher's or the author's vocation to set them at variance. The conditions of amity may be difficult of attainment. But my present parable plainly points the moral that, given on the one hand a publisher of high principle, of alert human sympathy, of capacity to appreciate great literature, and given on the other hand an author of genius, of modesty, of shrewdness, of frankness, and of honesty, there is no room for any sentiment between the two save genuine regard.

The manner in which Charlotte Brontë first made Mr. Smith's acquaintance is too well-worn a topic to merit repetition here. But for the sake of clearness a brief reference must be made to the episode. Everybody knows how Charlotte Brontë and her two younger sisters, while they

were in their teens, filled reams of paper with poems and novels. Surviving specimens show a stilted juvenility of the vaguest promise. The domestic griefs of adult years stimulated rather than slackened the three ladies' literary energies, but their first youth seems to have passed before the ambition seized them to see themselves in print. It was not till 1846, when Charlotte was thirty years old, that she and her sisters commissioned a London publisher to publish at their own expense a first volume—a collection of poems. The book had no success. But the sisters had tasted blood, and they now each offered a novel to a London firm. The aim of Charlotte's sister took effect. *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were accepted. But her own effort of *The Professor* was rejected without thanks. The failure did not daunt her pertinacity. Five times she re-addressed her manuscript to London publishers, only to meet with as many rebuffs. A seventh trial bore different fruit. The ill-fated manuscript reached a sympathetic harbourage in the office of Smith, Elder & Co., of 65 Cornhill. There it attracted the notice of the firm's reader, Mr. Smith Williams, a thoughtful critic, a student of fine taste. Williams detected the promise of *The Professor*, and, while declining its publication, invited with kindly encouragement another specimen of the author's work. *Jane Eyre* was despatched on

August 24, 1847. The result is universally known.

The manuscript fascinated Smith Williams. Mr. Smith read it one Sunday from end to end in the little study of his mother's house at Westbourne Place. It absorbed him from early morning till late at night. He could not tear himself from it to keep the day's engagements or even to take his meals. The book was quickly sent to press. Within a few weeks, on October 16, 1847, Charlotte Brontë's genius was revealed to the world.[1]

Few will need to be reminded that Charlotte Brontë addressed the firm under the masculine pseudonym of "Currer Bell," and represented herself as a man in all her early correspondence. From the first Mr. Smith saw through the disguise. His shrewd instinct convinced him that "Currer Bell, Esq.," was a woman.

In the early months of 1848 some friendly correspondence passed between Mr. Smith and

[1] Mr. Smith has noted the small circumstance that Charlotte Brontë in sending to his firm the manuscript of *Jane Eyre* apologized for her inability to prepay at Haworth the cost of carriage. She asked the firm to let her know the amount which should be charged on delivery, and promised to remit the sum in postage stamps. The simple request showed innocent anxiety lest the author's high hopes might be thwarted by a trifling accident, and points to obsolete perils of communication between writers living in remote places and London publishers.

Charlotte Brontë in her assumed name, but they did not meet till July, nine months after the publication of *Jane Eyre*. The immediate cause of the meeting need only be briefly indicated. Charlotte Brontë began *Shirley* very soon after she had finished *Jane Eyre*. At the same time her sister Anne had just completed her second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and was arranging to publish it under the accepted pseudonym of "Acton Bell," with Mr. Newby, the publisher of her first book, *Agnes Grey*. Mr. Newby informed Smith, Elder & Co. of an unfounded suspicion that Acton and Currer Bell were one person. Charlotte Brontë deemed it a point of honour to prove their separate identities. Suddenly she resolved that she and her sister Anne should reveal themselves in person to Mr. Smith in London. They arrived late one Friday night in July 1848, and next morning presented themselves at 65 Cornhill. Mr. Smith was busily occupied, and was for a moment puzzled by the intrusion. Charlotte drew from an envelope inscribed "Currer Bell, Esq.," a letter which she declared that the firm had sent her. Mr. Smith asked with some coolness what was a woman's title to a communication which the firm had addressed to a man. The needful explanation followed, and there and then was formed that chivalric friendship which only death terminated.

A visit to London was always for Charlotte Brontë a stirring venture. From girlhood, long before she made personal acquaintance with the city, the name thrilled her with a sense of mysterious wonder. Reports of its splendours at once attracted and repelled her youthful mind. It was her Babylon, her Nineveh, her ancient Rome. When her friend, Ellen Nussey, spent a few days there in 1834, Charlotte's letters vibrated vicariously with excitement over the dread experience. Ellen wrote carelessly of the first sight of the capital. Charlotte in reply confessed, by way of rebuke, "astonishment" and "awe" at the imagined marvels of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The mention of St. James's Palace filled her with "intense and ardent interest." The thought of meeting heroes like the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Daniel O'Connell in the London streets stirred her deepest feelings. At the same time she was femininely inquisitive about the Court and its ceremonies. Amid the dithyrambics with which she plied her fortunate friend on her first London sojourn, she asked with a comical bathos for "the number of performers in the King's military band." The smallest details of London life moved her eager curiosity.

London was indeed a word to conjure with among all the dwellers in Haworth parsonage.

The dissolute, art-loving brother Branwell craved in boyhood for a sight of the metropolis of art and sport. He gratified it for a few unlucky months at the end of 1835, after studying at home under his sister's eyes every thoroughfare marked on the map of the City. Charlotte's conception of London was first put to the test of experience in February 1842, when she was twenty-six. On her way with her sister Emily to M. Heger's school at Brussels, she then spent her first night and day in London. Her father accompanied them. The three visitors stayed at an old-fashioned tavern in an alley off Paternoster Row, at the Chapter Coffee House, in the very heart of the City, within view, through a narrow passage, of St. Paul's Cathedral. That object of her early awe with its chimes and its dome—"a solemn orbed mass, dark blue and dim"—dominated on her arrival her mind and heart. With passionate impressiveness she twice described her first nocturnal sensations of St. Paul's, in *The Professor*, and again in fuller detail in *Villette*. Next morning "the spirit of this great London" roused her to ecstasy. "At a bound," she said, she got into the heart of City life. She dared the perils of crossings with a light heart. The West End, the parks, the fine squares which she knew better at a later date left her cold. But the earnestness of the City held her spellbound. "Its business, its rush, its

roar were such serious themes and sights and sounds."

Glimpses of London even more fleeting were caught during the next two years. She slept again in the City on her return from Brussels to Haworth in the autumn of 1842. On her second visit to Brussels early next year (1843) she drove straight from Euston Railway Station to London Bridge Wharf and spent the night, an unwelcome passenger, on the Ostend packet, an incident which she vividly sketched in *The Professor*. Nor does her stay in London seem to have been prolonged beyond a night and a day, when she finally quitted Brussels for Haworth at the extreme end of the year 1843. However great its passing fascination at this period of her life, she found no further opportunity of personal scrutiny. London was still a hazy dream of glorious possibilities when she paid her memorable visit to Mr. Smith at Cornhill in July 1848.

Then, for the first time, her sojourn lasted for more nights than one. She and her sister Anne remained in the City for three full days. Their headquarters were still the Chapter Coffee House, off Paternoster Row. Two of their evenings were spent at the West End of the town, at No. 4 Westbourne Place, where Mr. Smith resided with his mother and sisters. Mr. Smith did not see Anne Brontë again. She died in less than a year, on May 28, 1849.

There quickly followed, during the next four years, four visits which finally brought London within Charlotte Brontë's full comprehension. During all these visits, she was Mr. Smith's guest beneath his mother's roof It was under his auspices and in his society that she realized her long-cherished ambition of familiarizing herself with London—its thrilling "themes and sights and sounds."

Only three months of her thirty-nine years were devoted to the City of her early hopes and fears. But those three months provided, as she acknowledged, some of the most stirring moments in her career. She taxed her strength by her persistency as a sightseer. Her courage was often tried by social intercourse with her literary compeers to whom Mr. Smith introduced her. She nerved herself for the encounters with the self-questioning rebuke: "Who but a coward would pass his whole life in hamlets?" But her spirit often quailed. Yet her study of human character gained in subtlety and generosity under the varied ordeals of the great City. In her maturest novel, *Villette*, she garnered the fruit of the broadened outlook on human nature which she owed to her London experience.

Mr. Smith was "the guide, philosopher, and friend" of Charlotte Brontë's London days. For full two-thirds of the nineteenth century he

played an interesting and important part on the literary stage apart from her and her work. His association with her was but one link in a long chain of achievement. Yet students of Charlotte Brontë's history and work have an especially good right to ask what manner of man he was as she knew him.

Miss Brontë's junior by eight years, Mr Smith had lately passed his twenty-fourth birthday when she, at the age of thirty-two, first introduced herself to him at his office in Cornhill. London-born, a child of Scottish settlers, he had already lived from boyhood a busy life, and had shown that large-minded spirit, that keen intuition, that sense of responsibility, that mercantile aptitude which characterized his remaining three-and-fifty years. In 1816, the year of Charlotte Brontë's birth, his father, a native of Elginshire, had opened (with a partner, Alexander Elder, a native of Banff) a booksellers' and stationers' shop in Fenchurch Street. "Booksellers" and "publishers" were then convertible terms, and Smith & Elder were publishers on a modest scale from early days. Soon moving to Cornhill, the partners grafted on their existing business an East India Agency, and for more than thirty years the firm pursued in ever-increasing volume the joint work of publishers and East India agents. Young Smith entered the twin business at the age of thirteen,

and at first took more kindly to the publishing than to the East Indian branch. His pupilage was brief. When he was no more than twenty —in 1844—his father's retirement, owing to failing health, flung on him the responsible charge of the growing concern, and circumstances quickly constituted him sole proprietor and director. His father soon died. Encouraged by his mother, from whom he inherited much of his firm and sanguine spirit, he weathered formidable initial difficulties, and under his control Smith, Elder & Co. became the chief East India agents and one of the leading publishing houses in London.

Mr. Smith had been only four years the firm's responsible chief when Charlotte and Anne Brontë called on him. A period of prosperity was opening for him in all directions, and before long he was to become the publisher of the flower of contemporary literature. The firm was already acting for Ruskin, then an unknown man under thirty, and with Ruskin Mr. Smith was already intimate. But at present the only novelist of any repute with whom Smith, Elder & Co. had been nearly associated was the grandiloquent writer of blood-curdling romance, G. P. R. James.

Of the first impressions that Mr. Smith made on Charlotte Brontë she has left a frank record in her letters. She wrote there of his youth, of

his practical instinct, his caution, his sense of honour, his enterprise, his quiet raillery. But her final and comprehensive study of his character was made in the medium of fiction. There are grounds for regarding *Villette* as her crowning achievement in literature. The book is to a large extent a recension of her early effort *The Professor*. But her touch had grown far firmer, and her outlook on life had widened since she made that first attempt. The old canvas was painted anew. Characters, of which she had no previous conception, were brought into the foreground. Bright colour for the first time illuminated the settled gloom. The cause of the cloud-lifting is not far to seek. The radiance was clearly caught from the character of Mr. Smith, from her close study of London sights under his surveillance, and from the cheerful hospitality which she enjoyed in his London home. Dr. John Graham Bretton, and his mother, Mrs. Bretton, who shed on the novel its warmest glow, are Miss Brontë's full and candid interpretations of the personalities of her London host and hostess. She bequeathed to posterity no more delightful gifts.

Miss Brontë has been charged with transcribing in all her novels her private experience somewhat too literally to satisfy the best canons of art. Of that charge I will speak briefly before I close. In *Villette*, at any rate, she

PONDEN HOUSE (THRUSHCROSS GRANGE).

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paints with curious fidelity many portraits of those with whom she had been in living contact both before and after she grew familiar with London. Villette is Brussels; her own sojourn at M. Heger's school and her companions there form the staple of her argument. But with an ingenuity that may be fairly styled felicitous she weaves into her canvas all the brightest threads of her London life.

No one who either knew Mr. Smith or heard him speak of his mother can fail to detect their two likenesses in Mrs. Bretton and Dr. John. To the portrayal of the son Charlotte Brontë brought her keen power of observation in its fullest blossom. The mother is sketched more lightly, but no less surely. No sign of either is given in the first sketch of the book in *The Professor*.

Some idealization is inseparable from fictitious portraiture even when the artist draws the lineaments directly from life. In the setting of Dr. John in medical practice at Villette there is nothing which reflects any phase of Mr. Smith's career. Dr. John's environment is either imaginary or assimilates gleanings from another household. It may be difficult here and there to reconcile a feature in the counterfeit presentment with one's own impression of the original. But the discrepancies are negligible. For those who knew Mr. Smith, Dr. John is a speaking

portrait. Nor does the resemblance end with the graphic presentment of character and outward aspect. In spite of divergence from actual fact in the surroundings, Dr. John and Lucy Snowe, the heroine of *Villette*, are involved in some digressive adventures identical with experiences which jointly befell Charlotte Brontë and Mr. Smith when the writer was visiting London.

In personal appearance Dr. John vividly recalls his prototype. The well-proportioned figure, the handsome and manly face and brow, the imposing height, the blue eyes, the hair worn rather long, which are precisely described in the novel, come straight from the unmistakable model. There is an unusual flicker of humour in the stress laid on the indeterminate hue of the hero's hair—such as friends did not venture to specify except as the sun shone on it "when they called it golden."

It is in psychological analysis of her friend and publisher's temperament that Miss Brontë shows her full strength. Admiringly sympathetic as is her prevailing tone, she was too critical and too honest an artist to indulge in unqualified panegyric. "Strong and cheerful, firm and courteous, not rash yet valiant," are the salient notes of her picture, and none who knew Mr. Smith can question the justice of these epithets' application. "Much feeling spoke in

his features and more sat silent in his eye." Of Dr. John's "gay and sanguine" temperament, of his generosity, his good nature, his amenity, Miss Brontë's pages do not lack the proof. But to her penetrating vision "Dr. John was not perfect any more than I am perfect." She declined to credit him with the attributes of "a god." She had no intention, she wrote to Mr. Smith himself, of keeping Dr. John "supremely worshipful"—"a being unlike real life, inconsistent with real truth, at variance with probability." "Human fallibility leavened him throughout." But the shadows are not dark. They add value to the portrait almost as much from the light they shed on the painter's idiosyncrasies as from any inherent value that attaches to them in the way of portraiture.

Charlotte Brontë's sense of humour was not strong. Though no stranger to the playful mood, she strictly checked its working. She was usually too serious and too earnest to approve any tendency to levity. Raillery or gentle ridicule she suspected of insincerity or worse. Innocent fun lay outside the normal scope of her intuition. Primness was intertwined with her passionate fibre. Hence came the main misgivings of her friend and publisher. In Mr. Smith's letters and conversation she noted hints of a playful disposition which puzzled her.

With characteristic frankness she wrote to him thus :—

> I will tell you a thing to be noted often in your letters and almost always in your conversation, a psychological thing and not a matter pertaining to style or intellect—I mean an undercurrent of quiet raillery, an inaudible laugh to yourself, a not unkindly, but somewhat subtle, playing on your correspondent or companion for the time being—in short, a sly touch of a Mephistopheles with the fiend extracted.

She confessed that she was at times half afraid of the enigmatic smile of questioning rebuke to which Mr. Smith's features lent themselves in her eyes.

Dr. John is invested with the like traits, and she dissects them almost mercilessly. "One could not in a hurry make up one's mind," she writes in one chapter of *Villette*, "as to the descriptive epithet it [i.e. Dr. John's smile] merited. While it pleased it brought surging up into the mind all one's foibles and weak points." The sentence is an eloquent confession of the writer's own sensitiveness. Dr. John's "mischievous half-smile" at other times seemed to her to betray either "masculine vanity elate and tickled," or an "unconscious roguish archness," which dashed the observer's equanimity.

More subtle failings suggested themselves as her brush worked over the canvas. She was inclined to blame her hero for a lighthearted

absorption in the pleasure of the moment and for a masculine self-esteem, which hovered in her judgment between a vice or virtue. While she amply acknowledged his consideration for others, she sometimes imputed to him slowness to apprehend the felicity of unsolicited benevolence.

> Though a kind, generous man, with fine feeling, he was not quick to seize or apprehend another's feelings. Make your need known, his hand was open ; put your grief into words, he turned no deaf ear ; expect refinements of perception, miracles of intuition, and realize disappointment.

Censure so searching bears witness to the exacting terms which the author imposed on her beau-ideal.

Every side of Mr. Smith's character was conscientiously surveyed under cover of Dr. John. With graphic literalness Dr. John's attributes reflect Mr. Smith's magnificent capacity for work and his methodical precision. While Charlotte Brontë was the guest of his mother in London, the calls of his heavy and incessant labours at Cornhill were often reckoned more than one man could sustain. It is obvious what Charlotte Brontë had in her mind when she made Lucy Snowe remark of Dr. John :—

> I can hardly tell how he managed his engagements. They were numerous ; yet by dint of system he classed them in an order which left him a daily period of liberty.

I often saw him hard-worked, yet seldom over-driven, and never irritated, confused, or oppressed. What he did was accomplished with the ease and grace of all-sufficing strength; with the bountiful cheerfulness of high and unbroken energies.

Nor does Charlotte Brontë depart a hair's breath from her circumambient text when she describes how Dr. John, despite his professional preoccupations, found time to gratify the heroine's taste for sightseeing. There is something like irrelevancy and inconsistency in the emphasis, which is laid in *Villette* on Dr. John's perfect knowledge of the points of interest in that French town where, according to the fiction, he was an alien dweller. Mr. Smith's exhaustive acquaintance with London, and his own accounts of the watchful care with which, at her instance, he conducted Miss Brontë through the labyrinth of its wonders, supply the key to the riddle. Theatres, opera-houses, picture galleries, newspaper offices, prisons, banks, hospitals, Parliament house, were all open to her with him as her guide. The chief object of her adoration, the Duke of Wellington, became to her a familiar figure, owing to Mr. Smith's ingenious pursuit of him at church or in street. Well might Lucy Snowe say of Dr. John: "Of every object worth seeing he seemed to possess the Open, sesame! . . . He took me to places of interest in the town, whose names I

had not before so much as heard." It was in one "happy fortnight" that Dr. John revealed to Lucy Snowe "more of Villette, its environs and inhabitants," than months could have shown her with a less efficient escort. Villette and London (as discovered to Charlotte Brontë by Mr. Smith) are here convertible terms.

Dr. John's minutest characteristics as *cicerone* are scrutinized with the same transparent significance. Dr. John would leave Lucy Snowe in a picture gallery or museum to study or meditate alone for two or three hours, and call for her when his business set him free. He did not oppress her with his own comment, nor pretend to connoisseurship which he did not possess. "He spoke his thought, which was sure to be fresh." His sensible criticism came from his own resources. It was not borrowed nor stolen from books, nor decked out with dry facts or trite phrases or hackneyed opinions. Pertinent details interested him. There was no superficiality about his power of observation. His talk was neither cold nor vague. "He never prosed."

A touching charm envelops all the relations which the book allots to Dr. John and his mother. Mrs. Bretton has practically no characteristics which tradition fails to trace in Mr. Smith's mother, and many of Mrs. Bretton's phrases are known to have fallen from Mrs.

Smith's lips. On her first introduction to Miss Brontë, Mrs. Smith was fifty-one years old, and had been a widow less than two years. Her youthful spirit was undimmed, and her son, as he often remarked, owed to her shrewdness, vivacity, and sanguine temper a large measure of the confidence with which he faced and conquered the heavy and complicated responsibilities that devolved on his young shoulders when his father died. The perfect understanding which linked mother and son together Charlotte Brontë transferred to her canvas with rare luminosity.

In a letter to a friend Miss Brontë gave her earliest impression of Mrs. Smith as "a portly, handsome woman of her age," and of her younger children as "all dark-eyed, dark-haired, and having clear, pale faces." This is how Mrs. Bretton was first brought to the reader's notice in *Villette*:—

> She was not young as I remember her, but she was still handsome, tall, well made, and though dark for an Englishwoman, yet wearing always the clearness of health in her brunette cheek, and its vivacity in a pair of fine cheerful black eyes.

Throughout the book Mrs. Bretton is credited at fifty with "the alacrity and strength of five-and-twenty," with a self-reliant mood and a decided bearing. She never, we are told, made a fuss over trifles, and was always self-possessed

in the presence of anxiety. Though she could be peremptory and commanding in manner, cheerfulness and benevolence possessed her being. Her son, who honoured her counsel, called her "old lady." His affectionate regard for her mingled at their hearth with a playful spirit of *camaraderie*. Hints are given in the book of a difficult pecuniary situation in the affairs of the family, which Mrs. Bretton and her son boldly met side by side. The reference to the half-told episode ends in *Villette* with these words: "So courageous a mother, with such a champion in her son, was well fitted to fight a good fight with the world, and to prevail ultimately." None can doubt that Miss Brontë here was reproducing some confidences given her by Mr. Smith or his mother of the days when he first took the helm at Cornhill.

The best tribute that one can pay to Mrs. Smith is that no more charming type of matronhood than Mrs. Bretton is known to fiction. Charlotte Brontë's final judgment on the hospitality which mother and son offered her in London is found in these fine sentences :—

> There are human tempers—bland, glowing, and genial—within whose influence it is as good for the poor in spirit to live, as it is for the feeble in frame to bask in the glow of noon. Of the number of these choice natures were certainly both Dr. Bretton's and his mother's. They liked to communicate happiness, as some like to occasion misery.

Smith's lips. On her first introduction to Miss Brontë, Mrs. Smith was fifty-one years old, and had been a widow less than two years. Her youthful spirit was undimmed, and her son, as he often remarked, owed to her shrewdness, vivacity, and sanguine temper a large measure of the confidence with which he faced and conquered the heavy and complicated responsibilities that devolved on his young shoulders when his father died. The perfect understanding which linked mother and son together Charlotte Brontë transferred to her canvas with rare luminosity.

In a letter to a friend Miss Brontë gave her earliest impression of Mrs. Smith as "a portly, handsome woman of her age," and of her younger children as "all dark-eyed, dark-haired, and having clear, pale faces." This is how Mrs. Bretton was first brought to the reader's notice in *Villette*:—

> She was not young as I remember her, but she was still handsome, tall, well made, and though dark for an Englishwoman, yet wearing always the clearness of health in her brunette cheek, and its vivacity in a pair of fine cheerful black eyes.

Throughout the book Mrs. Bretton is credited at fifty with "the alacrity and strength of five-and-twenty," with a self-reliant mood and a decided bearing. She never, we are told, made a fuss over trifles, and was always self-possessed

in the presence of anxiety. Though she could be peremptory and commanding in manner, cheerfulness and benevolence possessed her being. Her son, who honoured her counsel, called her "old lady." His affectionate regard for her mingled at their hearth with a playful spirit of *camaraderie*. Hints are given in the book of a difficult pecuniary situation in the affairs of the family, which Mrs. Bretton and her son boldly met side by side. The reference to the half-told episode ends in *Villette* with these words: "So courageous a mother, with such a champion in her son, was well fitted to fight a good fight with the world, and to prevail ultimately." None can doubt that Miss Brontë here was reproducing some confidences given her by Mr. Smith or his mother of the days when he first took the helm at Cornhill.

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tainment which Charlotte witnessed with Mr. Smith. Soon, however, after Charlotte left for Haworth, Mr. Smith was again present at the Devonshire House theatricals with his sister and a lady friend. On this occasion some scenery on the stage caught fire, and for a few seconds a panic threatened. Mr. Smith gripped his two companions by the wrist and with all his force held them to their seats. They complained bitterly of his roughness, but he helped thereby to stem the alarm. The smouldering flame was extinguished and confidence was restored. Mr. Smith wrote of the episode to Charlotte Brontë, and his story of the happily slender accident and of his own conduct bred in her throbbing mind the shocks and perils of the burning playhouse in Villette.

The last illustration which I give here of Charlotte Brontë's literary use of her London visits concerns not Mr. Smith alone, but also and more immediately Thackeray, the most eminent of the authors whom he made personally known to his guest.

Thackeray's fame was finally assured by the publication of *Vanity Fair* in 1847, a few months before the appearance of *Jane Eyre*. Thackeray's masterpiece filled Miss Brontë with enthusiastic admiration, and the author became at once an adored hero. She dedicated to him the second edition of *Jane Eyre* early in 1848. It was while

Thackeray's second great novel *Pendennis* was nearing the close of its original monthly issue that Miss Brontë gratified one of her cherished ambitions by meeting Thackeray in person. The occasion was a dinner given by Mrs. Smith and her son in 1849, when Miss Brontë was paying them a second visit. The thrilling event proved for her a more trying ideal than she anticipated. "In company," she wrote in *Villette*, "a wretched idiosyncrasy forbade me to see or feel anything. . . . I never yet saw the well-reared child, much less the educated adult, who could not put me to shame by the sustained intelligence of its demeanour" in social intercourse. When she first saw Thackeray face to face her shyness was invincible. "Excitement and exhaustion made savage work of me that evening," she wrote; "what he thought of me I cannot tell." Thackeray long remembered "the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great honest eyes." Other meetings followed between the two; but though Miss Brontë lost her first sense of speechless dread, the personal association never proved quite congenial on either side. Thackeray and Miss Brontë reverenced each other's genius with genuine sincerity. But Thackeray's easy half-cynical conversation ruffled her austerity. To him she presented herself as "a little austere Joan of Arc, marching in upon us and rebuking our easy lives and our easy

morals." His personality would seem to have both attracted and repelled her. On a morning call which Thackeray made her at Mr. Smith's house, she improved the occasion by reproaching him with his shortcomings. Mr. Smith has vivaciously described his own unheralded entry on "the queer scene." The little lady hardly reached Thackeray's elbow, but she plied the giant with a raking fire of invective before peace was restored. Miss Brontë declared that Thackeray behaved on the occasion "like a great Turk and heathen ; his excuses were worse than his crimes."

The peculiarly severe standard by which she judged Thackeray has left a curious trace on *Villette*. In May 1851, Mr. Smith and his mother took her to Willis's Rooms to hear the novelist deliver the second of his lectures on the Humourists. He recognized her in the audience, and after the lecture playfully introduced her to his mother as *Jane Eyre*, the title of her passionate heroine. Mr. Smith has recorded that she warmly resented the mode of address. But she was even more embarrassed by Thackeray's frank appeal to her to tell him how she enjoyed his performance. So natural a request disturbed her equanimity, and she had no word to offer. This slight fleeting encounter was enshrined a few months later in *Villette*. The Professor, Paul Emanuel, there gives, amid

applause, a lecture in the Villette Athénée, at which the heroine, Lucy Snowe, is present. Of the Professor's subsequent demeanour Charlotte Brontë writes thus in her rôle of Lucy Snowe :—

> As our party left the Hall, he stood at the entrance ; he saw and knew me, and lifted his hat ; he offered his hand in passing, and uttered the words "Qu'en dites-vous ?"—question eminently characteristic, and reminding me, even in this his moment of triumph, of that inquisitive restlessness, that absence of what I considered desirable self-control which were among his faults. He should not have cared just then to ask what I thought, or what anybody thought ; but he *did* care, and he was too natural to conceal, too impulsive to repress, his wish. Well ! if I blamed his over-eagerness, I liked his *naïveté*. I would have praised him : I had plenty of praise in my heart ; but, alas ! no words came to my lips. Who *has* words at the right moment ? I stammered some lame expressions, but was truly glad when other people, coming up with profuse congratulations, covered my deficiency with their redundancy.

The scene of May 1851 in Willis's Rooms is here faithfully recorded.

Another scene, in which Charlotte Brontë and Thackeray were the protagonists, was enacted in Thackeray's house the following month. The author of *Villette* found no place for this second adventure in her fiction. But all the details still live freshly in the memory of Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter, who herself played a part in the incident, and from her lips I learned a little more than I knew a week or two ago.

Both she and Mr. Smith have already described the chief features of the episode with vivacity in print. But the points of interest, whether new or old, are varied enough to excuse mention of it here.

It was one evening in June 1851, when both novelists were at the zenith of their high reputations, that the giant author of *Vanity Fair* gave at his house in Young Street, Kensington, a small evening party in honour of the little authoress of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*. She was on her longest visit to Mr. Smith and his mother across the Park, and Mr. Smith accompanied her to Thackeray's house. Lady Ritchie has written of the excitement with which her father, her sister, and herself awaited in the hall the great little lady's arrival. Dressed in a little *barège* dress with a pattern of faint green moss, the tiny and delicate woman entered the drawing-room, hanging on her host's arm, "in mittens, in silence, and in seriousness." To meet the celebrated writer there were gathered, as Lady Ritchie lately reminded me, women of the most brilliant intellect and speech in London. There were Mrs. Carlyle, the witty and sardonic wife of Thomas Carlyle ; Mrs. Brookfield, the clever wife of the fashionable preacher ; Mrs. Procter, overflowing in good spirits and shrewdness, wife of Charles Lamb's friend and biographer, Barry Cornwall. All were anxious to show

respect for the distinguished guest, and were exhilarated by the expectation of greeting her. But Miss Brontë was under a nervous spell, and her mental lassitude spread through the room. A blight settled on the assembly. Charlotte repulsed the ladies' advances. Mrs. Brookfield opened conversation with the expression of a hope that Miss Brontë liked London. The skirmish ended with the novelist's curt reply, "I do and I don't." The gloom thickened; the lamp began to smoke; Thackeray's native gaiety drooped; all hearts grew chill. The host, unable to cope with the silence, as his daughter tells us, furtively on tiptoe made for the street door, and sought the consolation of his club. His daughter, mystified by his retreat, suggested to the party in the drawing-room that he would be back soon; but he did not return till his guests had departed. To Lady Ritchie's memory Charlotte still presents herself as a shy and prim little governess who regarded children like herself and her sister with a freezing severity. Mr. Smith, Charlotte's companion at Thackeray's memorable party, said that as she drove back with him to his mother's house, she spoke acidly of the two little girls.[1]

[1] I am informed by Miss Millais, daughter of the late Sir John Everett Millais, President of the Royal Academy, that her father was among Thackeray's guests at the party given in Charlotte Brontë's honour. Millais, then a young man of

One's sympathy goes out to this visitor to London drawing-rooms from the Yorkshire moors. Seasoned Londoners could at a first glance find little in her that was prepossessing, and many probably acquiesced in George Henry Lewes's ungallant designation of her as "a little plain, provincial, sickly-looking old maid." In her first draft of *Villette*, which embodied so much of her London experience, she gave herself (who is the heroine) the surname of "Frost," altering it to "Snowe" in the final version. But her coldness was superficial. No good and charitable judges could misconceive the warm enchantment of her genius, and her manner yielded most of its self-conscious crudity and asperity to the sympathetic influence of Mr. Smith's hospitality.

The publication of *Villette* in January 1853,

two-and-twenty, had already made considerable reputation as a painter. "I wish," Miss Millais writes to me on February 28, 1909, "I had written down my father's recollections of Miss Brontë. He saw her several times in 1851, and must have been introduced to her at the party, which Lady Ritchie describes wonderfully as being so painful. He told me very much the same thing, and said he was taken up by Thackeray, and Miss Brontë spoke to him. He said her eyes were quite remarkable, and afterwards Miss Brontë remained in appearance his idea of a woman genius. The little lady 'looked tired with her own brains.' He met her afterwards at Mrs. Procter's, where she was not so shy, and he was anxious to do a drawing of her, but found she was already engaged to sit to George Richmond."

brings Charlotte Brontë's relations with London to a fitting close. The book was begun early in 1851, after she had twice—for some weeks in each of the preceding two years—enjoyed the hospitality of Mrs. Smith and her son. The manuscript occupied her at intervals until the autumn of 1852. When she forwarded at that season the greater portion to Mr. Smith, her correspondence gives many signs of anxiety lest her bold transcription of his character should cause him discontent. But the wise publisher kept his counsel, and she as prudently made no excuses. He pronounced in general terms a highly favourable verdict. Some of his criticism on details she neglected, and he did not press them. He hinted at some "discrepancy," "a want of perfect harmony" in the conception of Dr. John. There came, too, a suggestion from London that Dr. John should in the closing chapters marry Lucy Snowe. But no such intention found place in Charlotte Brontë's design. "Lucy," she wrote to Mr. Smith, "must not marry Dr. John: he is far too youthful, handsome, bright-spirited, and sweet-tempered; he is a curled darling of nature and fortune, and must draw a prize in life's lottery. His wife must be young, rich, pretty: he must be made very happy indeed." In the book Dr. John is mated elsewhere, and he passes out of Lucy Snowe's life without the exchange of

any confidence of the heart. The heroine's passion is centred on the grim, great-hearted professor, Paul Emanuel, who dies shipwrecked in the Atlantic Ocean. The knell of death, not wedding bells, sounds the epilogue.

When in January 1853 the printing of *Villette* was on the point of completion, Miss Brontë stayed a fourth and last time under the Smiths' roof in London. For a crowded fortnight, sight-seeing was continued under Mr. Smith's escort with all the old ardour. Miss Brontë was still Mr. Smith's guest on the day of *Villette's* publication, and she was at hand to hear the burst of unqualified applause with which London greeted this last of the works to be published in her lifetime. Early in February 1853 she left for Haworth, and Mr. Smith did not meet her again. Later in the year their two lives underwent almost simultaneously a momentous change. Mr. Smith became engaged to the lady whom he married on February 11, 1854, and Miss Brontë accepted the long-urged suit of her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls. Mr. Smith and Charlotte Brontë exchanged notes of mutual congratulation, and with her warm expressions of good wishes for Mr. Smith's married happiness Miss Brontë's correspondence with her publisher seems to have closed. Her own quiet wedding took place a few months later (June 29, 1854), and she died on March 31, 1855.

Mr. Smith lived on till April 6, 1901. Many and vast were the new interests which absorbed him in the long interval between Charlotte Brontë's death and his own. Many were the new titles he acquired to fame and affection in middle life and in age. He has numerous claims to live in literary history. He lives there as the friend of authors so illustrious as Thackeray and Browning, whose works he published after he became Miss Brontë's publisher. He lives there as the founder of the *Cornhill Magazine* and of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and even more conspicuously as the public-spirited projector and proprietor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But whatever recognition is due to these achievements, it should never be forgotten by the literary historian any more than by Charlotte Brontë's disciples that he was in youth the original of her sound-hearted, manly, and sensible Dr. John, who ranks with the most cheering portaits of masculine virtue that the hand of genius has drawn.

That tendency, which Charlotte Brontë so signally exemplifies in Dr. John and Mrs. Bretton, of interpreting in her novels men and women with whom she came into personal contact, is often reckoned a defect in her art. It is complained, too, that she indulged overmuch in self-portraiture, and that her heroines, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, present with too little

qualification her own outlook on life as she records it in her private correspondence. The links that bind her fictitious personages to herself and her living associates crowd, indeed, upon the student of her life, and this "audacious fidelity," as one critic terms it, has been cited as proof of limitation in her power of invention. But the point against her may easily be pressed too far. Every novelist presents in his work something of himself and his relations with kinsfolk, friends, and acquaintances. Fielding, Miss Austen, Scott, Thackeray, all faithfully transcribe much of themselves and of the life around them. Yet Miss Brontë's censors, even when they admit the question to be one only of degree, aver that she depends more directly and to a larger extent than any novelists in the first rank on the immediate suggestion of her own sensation and environment. Neither Sterne's Uncle Toby nor Thackeray's Colonel Newcome, we are reminded, has an identifiable model. Both, as far as are known, were compounded in the crucible of their creators' imagination. On the other hand, Paul Emanuel, Miss Brontë's most complex and most finished presentment of human nature, is commonly reckoned a portrait from the life ; Dr. John, her most radiant picture of mankind, is an avowed delineation of Mr. Smith.

Broadly speaking, the argument would seem to merit less attention than has been paid it.

After all, it matters little whence Charlotte Brontë gleaned her material compared with the uses to which she put it. No artist in fiction can reach a higher level of achievement than that of producing an irresistible illusion of life with its throbbing emotion, its elations, its depressions, its hopes and fears. A novelist's records of fact and observation come to little unless they are clothed in the habiliments of genuine feeling. In the absence of adequate imagination, men and women, whence-soever they come, move on the printed page like lay figures. Miss Brontë's imaginative endowment has been excelled in breadth and intensity. But her imaginative grip was strong enough to transmute her studies from the life into breathing entities of flesh and blood. Penetrating insight lent "a colossal phlegm and force" to the measure of creative faculty within her scope and the fiery glow of her language leaves an abiding conviction that, whatever else she closely studied, she was deeply versed in the human heart. At any rate she was unflinching in her pursuit of the truth about her fellow-creatures, and it was her patient and honest scrutiny of Mr. Smith which discovered for her Dr. John's humane and cheery heroism.

SIDNEY LEE.

W. R. Bland.

ON HAWORTH MOOR.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE MOORS

By HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE

An Address delivered to the Brontë Society, at Morley, on January 18, 1902.

FOREWORD

"THE Spirit of the Moors," written long ago, roused odd feelings when I came to it afresh. The years have gone, with their wear and tear ; but I can find nothing to add, nothing to take away. None but those who are bone of the moor's bone—bred of the heath, reared on its sun and sleet and tempests—can understand what we of the free lands know, what no wayfaring, save the Last Adventure, can ever change. And on the far side of that Adventure there will be, one thinks, a richer purple on the heather, colours even more mystical and changeful than the old days gave when sundown came to swart old Haworth Moor. In outlying farmsteads of the heath there are peat-fires burning still that have been alight for centuries. Night by night the good wife has banked them up, dusted away the ashes, and come down next day to stir the dying embers into heat again. It is so with the heart of the heath-bred man. His fires may seem to slumber, with dull, grey ash above them ; but at the core there is a red and quiet heat, generations old, that cannot die.

Out of it all—the moor's splendour and its storm—its man's strength and woman's coquetry, and the little, ferny glens that are like children singing as they gather posies—there was born a spirit caged by human flesh. It was a hard life Emily Brontë had, and her body would have been too weak to bear it, if it had not been for this fire at her heart that would not die. Whenever she was away from Haworth Moor, she sickened for the homeland ; it was not the ins-and-outs of parish life she needed, but the spaces of the heath that swung out, free and faithful, to Bouldsworth and the further crest of Pendle Hill.

Out of her travail *Wuthering Heights* was born, and she died of the adventure. And it was well worth while. She gave her life for that one book, and it lives on among us—as Shakespeare lives, who asked for no knighthood but remembrance.

When the dusk comes down on Haworth Moor, and I walk among remembered farmsteads, and scent the lusty fragrance of the byres, there is one scene in *Wuthering Heights* that returns to me with the strength and grace of an older day. There is little Cathy tapping at the window of Wuthering Heights, asking to be let in, because it is cold in the Further Lands until her mate joins her. And there is Heathcliff, dying hard and sullenly, with no faith in the Beyond to help him through the time of separation.

At the end of all, there are primroses, dewy-eyed with hope and faith in the long hereafter. As long as there is a strip of Northern soil untouched by mills and smoke—as long as the heather-lands roam wide and free, a sanctuary for the souls that reach out and beyond the crude din of machinery—there will be the tapping of little Cathy at the window, and smell of the heath, and the magic of old dreams.

HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE.

July 1916.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOORS

It has been well said that when truth left the valleys, it took refuge on the hills. From times of old the hills have been the mothers of conquering sons ; from times of old the hills have sheltered every primitive virtue, of loyal love and worthy hate, of mothers' tenderness and fathers' pride ; from of old the soldiers of the world have gone down from the hill-tops and have prevailed. This is true of the hills where cattle graze, and sheep clip the springy grass ; it is truer still of the moorland spaces where grass is hard in the winning, where ling and rush and bilberry fight hand-to-hand with the acres wrested from the heath.

Consider ! Flodden Field—that last decisive, desperate fight—was won by hill-fed thew and sinew of our Craven men. It is the same through history. The race has not been to the swift ; the victors have been slow farmer-fellows, who have learned endurance from wind and rain and cutting sleet, who have been taught the exquisite, long lesson of patience under heavy odds. In

skill of arms alone the farmer stands supreme—the world's history is his history, and seed and growing blade and harvest-time have been with him, like a benediction, when the ploughshare shaped itself into a pike, and the sickle straightened itself into a broad and hilted sword.

Patience, infinite patience. Toil, infinite toil. Faith beyond the limits of bread, which is oft-times doubtful. These are the moorland virtues. The very ling, the crowberry, the late-budding bracken, show the same tough fibre; the men of the moors, the plants of the moors, are one in spirit and endurance. What would come to the ling and the bracken, if they had no heart to meet the winter storms? What would chance to the moorland farmers if they sank, as lesser men would do, beneath the weight of cold in winter, of drought in summer, of peevish autumn storms? Life is a fight to the moor-man always, and for this reason he is staunch in hatred, loyal in love, quick to bear arms against the adversary.

He is no saint, this man of the moors. He is no sinner. He feels the wind in his teeth, and he fights it; and now and then he is answerable for dread deeds, which lesser folk can neither understand nor judge. One knows of midnights—historic now, so far as country tales can make them—when the Squire drank level with the poacher, and battered faces smiled at recollection of some moon-mad prank played long

ago. We know of superstitions which set the hair on end when passing lonely heaths. There is the glamour and the terror of the Dog on all the moonlit wastes of heath that lie between Haworth and old Bouldsworth Hill. It is a land of strength, and fear, and witchery.

And yet the voice of grouse and plover, of snipe and moor-fowl, was stronger than man's voice till Emily Brontë came. The outer world knew nothing of the storm and fret of Haworth Moor till *Wuthering Heights* was born. The ling had bloomed in purple glory—the crowberry had ripened its black-purple berries—dawn and sunset had weaved glory from the waste—and none had told the world how sweet these things can be. And then she came, and gave us *Wuthering Heights*, and died before the song in her had reached its deepest compass.

These things of the heath are hard to speak about; religion of any type is hard in the telling to one who holds the faith; and to attempt praise of Emily Brontë is to praise the purple of dawn, the gold and red of sunset, the full and satisfying glory of nature in her highest moods. She came at a time when the novel was at last the true expression of mind and soul and heart; she came also at a time when the older traditions still held a dying power, when the green hue of sentimentality sicklied o'er the live passions of bare human nature; yet she

REPRODUCTION OF WATER-COLOUR DRAWING OF DOG "KEEPER," BY EMILY BRONTË.

Now in the Brontë Museum.

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knew what she knew, and never once did she waver in the expression of her faith.

Emily Brontë is the Joan of Arc of literature. Joan of Arc had all the trappings of evident romance. She rode in armour to the fray, and, a woman, fought with men in open battle. She is a picture in history such as the populace love; she has the limelight on her always, and it is easy for us all to applaud her heroism. Emily Brontë had none of these things; she was a pale, great-boned, unhappy girl who shunned her fellows; she had no single outward gift that could appeal to a man's senses; she knew no lover; yet, with it all, she has drawn for us so stupendous a picture of human love, of human hate, of human yearning after the impossible, that men and women, who have known passion, know also that she held passion's secret in her pen. Whence came it? Whence comes the pregnant sap in springtime trees, whence comes the unalterable motherhood of kine, of birds at mating-time, of women in their happiness? None can tell. It is God-given, and that is all we know.

We who have been playmates with the heath, and bedfellows to the whistling winds and rain and winter snow of Haworth Moor, know that the dullest line of *Wuthering Heights* has that deepest interest of all—the interest of naked passion and naked truth. It is the one book

of the world, in that it could not, in a single word, have been written otherwise. It is the one book of the world, in that it shows the moor-life, as it were, reflected in a tarn of crystal clearness. It has no morality, it advocates no creed ; its teaching is the teaching of the wind as it sweeps from Lancashire across old Haworth Moor ; it is built upon the rock of Nature, who is pitiless and tender, angelic and demoniac, all in the one breath. The world has bowed at the shrine of many conquerors—Cæsar, Alexander, and the rest—but there is one Heathcliff, and one only. Not Alexander at his greatest—when he was sighing for fresh worlds to conquer—could have imagined a hero of Heathcliff's fibre. Not Cleopatra at her softest could have pictured a heroine so tender, so illusive, and so complete, as Cathy. The thing is witchery.

Take Heathcliff from his surroundings, and what have we? A morose, self-centred savage, who loves his fleshly idol with a passion scarcely decent. But set Heathcliff in the midst of bog and heath and waving bracken, and he's a man framed after the likeness of a god. He knows no law, save of the wind and the whistling plover ; he knows no obstacle to love, save of the woman's heart ; he is complete, a man in the swiftness and the surety of his passions—and yet a superhuman creature, in that he is never less than himself, never false by word or

deed to the past that lies behind him, to the fate that lies ahead.

Indeed, it is this completeness of each character in the book that makes *Wuthering Heights* a masterpiece of art. The natural truth—of scene-drawing and of the play of passion—alone would have held us spellbound; but by its art—a delicacy of art surprising in so rough a tale—it claims our quieter love upon a second—nay, a twentieth reading. The very looseness of the narrative, the casual coming of a stranger to the moors, and his interrupted sittings with the teller of the tale, all help to conceal the steady handling of a story such as no brain but Emily Brontë's could have conceived, such as no pen but hers could have set down. It is not Heathcliff only who satisfies us; it is not Cathy only; it is each actor in this moorside drama, whether a farm hind or a nurse, a Squire of the valley-lands, or a hulking ploughboy of the uplands. Joseph, Pharisee, farm-hand, and misanthrope, who thrives on a sort of rough-edged joy in his own righteousness and in the sins of other folk, is as much a bit of Haworth Moor as the rocks that underlie its heather and the sleeting wind that whistles from the wastes of Stanbury. Nellie the nurse, a little prim, a little hard in the shell and vastly soft in the kernel, full of housewife's maxims and the bustling, tart satisfaction with things as they are, which distinguishes the woman

of her hands—she, too, is ready at this day to greet you and to brew a cup of tea for you in that happy, storm-swept land which lies between the edge of Yorkshire and the edge of Lancashire.

And what of Cathy? Ah, there's the south-west wind about her! The south-west wind, that comes in summer down the wooded denes and clefts of our grim moorland, the wind that has the softness of the flowering ling about it, the bitter-sweet of peat and bogland, the nameless scents that are born every year, clean, sharp and fragrant, when the moorland flowers awake, and the primrose blows in sheltered hollows, and every mistal, shouldering green fields, gives out its witching odour of the kine. She is just this, the heroine of *Wuthering Heights*, and we might as well criticize the wind of summer as take her character to pieces, bit by bit, as is our modern fashion, and set a price upon each word and action. Like Heathcliff, she is above praise or censure; her will is the will of the moor-top and the sky, and we are satisfied. We are more; we are enamoured, and *Wuthering Heights* is at war with womankind in that we dare not, in our ideal of her sex, stoop lower than this Cathy, with her strange eeriness and stranger warmth of breathing flesh and blood, with her perverseness that is sinless and her passion that is strained—as it were, through

gossamer threads of fairy-weaving—until it seems, not passion, but clear water from the well which is needed to dilute the rough-edged wine of Heathcliff's frenzy. She is a woman to make men lightly sell their birthright—and sell it with a laugh upon their lips. All feeling comes back ultimately to odours, and Cathy is to us what lavender is at flowering time, what rosemary is, with all its sweetness of remembrance, what wild-roses are when they flower between the drooping tendrils of the honeysuckle.

Perhaps she is the truest note in all the book, as possibly the short-lived summer of the uplands is the interpreter of storms that have gone before, of tempests that will surely follow. Amid the roughness, the violence, the blows and oaths and hardships of the tale, as we get these brief, ensnaring glimpses of the girl, as we hear the pulse of Heathcliff beat high and strong, and see the love-look in his gipsy eyes, we are aware of sunshine and the scent of hay.

Heathcliff, for his part, was not born of the moors, and in this, too, there is a strange surety of instinct. Had he been moor-born, he would have been tied by old tradition; as it was, he came, a nameless waif picked up in Liverpool, and ran wild about the heath with no responsibility to forbears or to family pride. How that picture of his coming to the Heights lives with us! A swarthy slip of Pagandom,

brought home on a dark night beneath the master's cloak. Even at this first moment of our seeing him, we feel the tragedy of after-years loom mistily ahead ; from the first he is at war with all upon the moor, except little Cathy and the doting master ; from the first he is acquiescent under ill-treatment, so long as he wins his point at last ; from the first, too, he takes up the thread of that passion for Catherine Earnshaw which is to grow to bitter fruit one day. He grows from inch to inch—good bone and muscle, all of it—and lives upon the moors, and sucks the meaning of the wind and storm as other lads suck lollipops. Nothing affrights him, except grace and gentleness ; when he and Cathy roam down to Linton Manor—a well-matched pair of fly-by-nights—and the dog fixes its curved teeth in the girl's ankle, he is afraid, lad as he is, only for her pain, and tries, with a cool eye for ways and means which older men might envy, to force open the foam-licked jaws with the nearest lump of rock. When he is beaten, bruised by the master's jealous son, he never whimpers—nor forgets. He is daunted only when Cathy—little Cathy, who had been his guardian angel and his scapegrace playmate—comes back after a five-weeks' visit to the Lintons, all dainty in her frippery, and minded to play the great lady as only a child can play it. Then, for the first time, Heathcliff is afraid, as a man

is afraid of crushing a flower beneath his thick, nailed boots; for the first time he is jealous, with a premonition that she will nevermore be to him what she has been. The rift grows wider. On one side is the girl, dainty, generous, headstrong; on the other is the lad, who has never learned that even flower-like lassies are to be won by long endurance. He is as the wind and God's moorland made him; so long as he is free to blow whither he listeth, he is musical and gay; but, soon as he is thwarted, his note turns to sullen wildness, as of tempest beating on thick, hill-top walls. Wider the rift grows and wider; he sees the gentler folk from the valleys come mincing and smirking into that grim house of Wuthering Heights which asked for sterner visitors; he sees his Cathy grow daily fonder of soft speeches, and soft clothing, and soft ways; small wonder that he fled into that dismal prison-house called "Self," and showed the sullen bars of hate to all intruders, even to Cathy of the flower-like face and dancing heart.

Our love for Heathcliff would have gone had he done otherwise. The girl loved him—yes, even in those days she loved him!—and she played with her love as women will play with apple-bloom in Spring, forgetful that they are robbing earth of her just harvest. Because her love was in blossom only, not in fruit, she chose to play with it; and afterwards the dead petals

showered about her, and she wondered, all in a maid's way, who had shaken the branches of that Tree of Love. And Heathcliff, meanwhile—blunt, a man—did not ask whether this were sport or earnest; all things were earnest to him—blows, and winter snow, and promise of the harvest—and he thought that Cathy was forgetting. He had a right to think so; and there was none at Wuthering Heights well-versed enough in trickery to tell him of the gulf that lies between what a woman feels and what she shows. His misery turned inward, like a malignant growth; he must have all or nothing—so much the moors had taught this gipsy—and, since he had lost some of Cathy, he would forfeit all that lay between herself and him. He ceased to wash—he did not speak when company was forced upon him—he did not trouble to un-arch his sullen, gipsy brows, nor to let his heart speak out of the dark, gipsy eyes. And most of all he showed those outward signs of inward misery when Cathy, mistress of his fate, was near. And she, who had learned no lesson such as Eve learned after her girlhood was over and done with, must flout him for a boor. And so the gulf widened, deepened, and Edgar Linton—a toy-terrier of a man—came walking down her side of the valley.

She married Linton. It was inevitable, predestined. And she repented; that, too, was

predestined and inevitable. No throstle in its wicker cage was ever wilder with its wings against the bars than Catherine Linton when she learned what wedded life must be henceforward. She had known the winds and the rains, even as Heathcliff had known them ; she had lived with men, who, it is true, swore hard upon occasion, but who understood what is written upon the naked heart of life; and yet she was mated with one who, if he had gentler manners, had also a vastly tender skin. Heathcliff—her woman's instinct told her that—had loved her with a man's passion ; her husband loved her as a petted spaniel loves its mistress.

And so a second rift grew wide and wider, and surely the wife was not to blame. Linton should have mated in the valleys ; he had no place with such as Catherine. True he came out in braver colours later, but over-late to convince us ; and that, too, is a triumph of character-drawing, for the author never meant that we should see any mate but Heathcliff for Catherine of the Heights. Like the wind, his only tutor, Heathcliff disappears after Cathy's marriage ; like the wind he reappears, and woos the sister of his rival ; like the wind that riots in the autumn, he overthrows well-garnered stacks, and while he woos the sister of his enemy, he snatches a wild meeting from his enemy's wife—from Cathy, who was his by all laws of fellowship and love—

and leaves poor Edgar Linton, with a flicker of late-found bravery, to marshal his gardener and his stable-boys in battle array. And through it all the author's mind is clear—she knows that Heathcliff was robbed of his mate, and she deals out the punishment, even as fate deals out its punishment, to innocent and guilty. Never, perhaps, in any book has there been less regard for obvious and untrue conclusions ; there is no moralizing, no appeal to blind maxims and blinder powers of vengeance, because Heathcliff comes to claim his own ; the facts are stated—facts inevitable as the storms that lay the hard-won harvest low—and we are left to gather in our fingers the threads of a story inevitable, true, and therefore just. What temptation would have beset a writer of weaker fibre to point, at this juncture, a moral so trite as to be wearisome ! The toy terrier of a husband might have been set in a frame of martyrdom, and all his weakness forgotten amid a lurid tale of all his wrongs and all poor Heathcliff's villanies. But Emily Brontë is above such meannesses ; she tells what is, and in her heart, as we have said, she knows that Heathcliff is the worthier man. As for Cathy—unhappy, ill-mated, full of bodily weakness and aware of a new life in her, a life that is not hers and Heathcliff's, but hers and Linton's—Cathy knows not what to say when her gipsy-lover comes and shatters, with a single kiss, the

mockery of wedded life which she has scarcely attempted to render real. Cathy knows not what to say; women rarely do if there is anything at stake; but what she feels is rendered clear by a hundred subtle touches.

Oh, it is wrong, according to straight lines and maxims ordered like a figure of geometry! Yet she had as little power to help her gladness as the thrush has, when for a moment it sees its cage door opened and feels the singing wind of heaven come beating in. Heathcliff was hers, and she was his; they had wedded long ago, with the hill-tops for their church, with laverock, grouse, and plover for their choir; and no haphazard marriage of the flesh could alter that.

Mark the clean way of it. This scene with Heathcliff, who comes to supplant the lawful husband; there's never a touch of squalor or of sin in it; it is no vulgar intrigue between a woman tired of constancy and a man who preys upon his neighbour's property; it is a scene of natural tempest, of unavoidable, clean storm, as when the clouds, full-charged with lightning, and weary, like the kine at milking-time for easing of their burden, break out in rain and shattered tempest-wrack. The man and the woman do not halt to ask if they love each other; as well might they question the number of their limbs, or the knowledge that they lived.

This one scene is the triumph and the key-

note of the book ; and after it is done, after Heathcliff has vanished, gipsy-like, into the larger spaces of the moor, after Cathy lies down upon a narrow bed and courts delirium, we realize the wonder and the witchery of this passion which is truth. Cathy has lost what little sense of worldly prudence she has known ; she lies there in her weakness, and her heart is given to us, naked, plain to be read. And over that suffering, wilful, madly beating heart, there is written, across and across, the one name Heathcliff. When she remembers her husband, she despises and is weary of him ; and again she goes over well-remembered scenes that she and Heathcliff have lived through together. What they dreamed, of fairies and of hobgoblins on Penistone Crag ; how they had listened to the wind as it blew through the stark old house of Wuthering Heights ; little snatches of moor-lore, learned long ago in company with her mate.

Perhaps none but a moor-man can understand the feeling that one passage from this drama always wakes in one. It is after Cathy has lain long abed, fasting and fevered ; she takes the pillow between her little teeth and tears it into shreds—but the scene cannot be described in any other words but Emily Brontë's.

Tossing about, she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth ; then raising

herself up all burning, desired that I would open the window. We were in the middle of winter, the wind blew strong from the north-east, and I objected.

Both the expressions flitting over her face, and the changes of her moods, began to alarm me terribly; and brought to my recollection her former illness, and the doctor's injunction that she should not be crossed.

A minute previously she was violent: now, supported on one arm, and not noticing my refusal to obey her, she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made, and ranging them on the sheet according to their different species: her mind had strayed to other associations.

"That's a turkey's," she murmured to herself; "and this is a wild duck's; and this is a pigeon's. Ah, they put pigeons' feathers in the pillows—no wonder I couldn't die! Let me take care to throw it on the floor when I lie down. And here is a moorcock's; and this—I should know it among a thousand—it's a lapwing's. Bonny bird; wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot—we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dare not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing after that, and he didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nellie? Are they red, any of them? Let me look."

"Give over with that baby-work!" I interrupted, dragging the pillow away, and turning the holes towards the mattress, for she was removing its contents by handfuls. "Lie down and shut your eyes; you're wandering. There's a mess! The down is flying about like snow."

That gives us all the past in half a dozen lines. The latent cruelty of Heathcliff, the

power of Cathy over his cruelty, the intimate, deep knowledge of the moors they shared—all are brought before us as the scent of heather brings back forgotten scenes, forgotten hopes, forgotten lessons taught us by our mother, Nature. That mention of the lapwing—it is almost weird in its very fitness, like the keystone of a graceful arch. The peewit is a well-nigh sacred bird to the moor-folk, for it voices their own feelings; and Heathcliff, untrammelled by tradition, is restrained in cruelty by the voice of one who has learned, from the far-off fathers, the sanctity of the shrill-piping lapwing.

What is the charm this heath-born girl holds in her pen-point? She cannot go astray; whether she pictures the strength of passion, the weakness of glad self-surrender, the least first signs of springtime or of storm upon the heath, she always satisfies. She knows, and she is true to knowledge; she gives us all the things that are, and passes by the things that valley-folk count worthy, with a courage scarcely human.

They tell us Emily Brontë never mixed with her fellows. Her own sister gravely states that she knew as little of the world's life as a nun knows of the folk who pass her convent gate. Yet they forget that smoke betokens fire, that *Wuthering Heights* could never have been

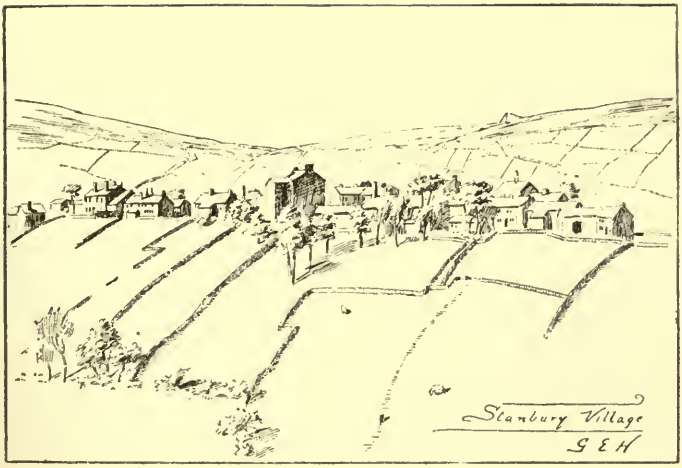
written by one who did not know the secret places and the secret passions of the moor; they forget, too, that Emily Brontë, even in death, was solitary, reliant, and alone. Her own family —they have confessed it—feared to skirt the fence that she had raised between herself and her own class; yet they did not guess that she sought her own companionship in her own way, and that the farmer-folk of Haworth were more to her than all the genteel worldlings who gather round a parsonage. She did not care for parochial life; the buzz of scandal, the clatter of tea-cups, all the polite instruments that we have devised for destroying our neighbours' happiness and our own, had neither interest nor attraction for her. She was silent, unapproachable, amid such matters; but, once her feet were set upon that narrow and that lone green way which led towards the heath, she was herself. Proof, beyond the pages of *Wuthering Heights*, is not needed to convince us that she knew, as a native knows it, that wilder world of ling, and peat, and marsh, and lone farmsteading, which lies beyond and above the world of little folk. Her dialect alone is witness to her knowledge; it is true to the old folk-speech of Haworth and Stanbury Moor, in the days before steam and all its million evils came to undo the primitive, straight honesty of the hillmen. Her knowledge of the springs of thought

is true. Her instinct of the things that matter, as apart from the things that serve to pass an idle hour, is direct as a north wind blowing over winter snow.

It is part of fate's humour that truth should be late-born ; it is part of fate's humour that Charlotte Brontë should have written, almost wholly in apology, her preface to *Wuthering Heights*. The 'prentice hand pleaded for leniency towards his master's work, and what was written in flame and smoke of a soul's travail was sent out to the world with a foreword written by one who, great in her own way, had yet no intimacy with the deeper springs of life, of passion and of destiny.

The book itself, by grace of fortune, is still with us. The spirit of the moors is still with us, though, like the Covenanters of old, it hides among the highest hill-tops. Perhaps it would be well to finish here, with these as our last words ; yet somehow there is something left still to be said of *Wuthering Heights*—and something, too, of that hapless brother of Emily Brontë's who has found few kindly judges in the world.

Again the book must speak for itself, as a weaker page cannot speak. Soon after the crucial scene with Heathcliff, soon after those wild memories of days gone by, we find Edgar Linton in his wife's chamber.



THE WITHINS (WUTHERING HEIGHTS).

To face p. 272.

At first she gave him no glance of recognition ; he was invisible to her abstracted gaze.

The delirium was not fixed, however ; having weaned her eyes from contemplating the outer darkness, by degrees she centred her attention on him, and discovered who it was that held her.

"Ah ! you are come, are you, Edgar Linton ?" she said with angry animation. "You are one of those things which are ever found when least wanted, and when you are wanted, never ! I suppose we shall have plenty of lamentations now —I see we shall—but they can't keep me from my narrow home out yonder : my resting-place, where I'm bound before Spring is over ! There it is : not among the Lintons, mind, under the chapel roof, but in the open air with a headstone ; and you may please yourself whether you go to them or come to me !"

"Catherine, what have you done ?" commenced the master. "Am I nothing to you any more ? Do you love that wretch Heath——"

"Hush !" cried Mrs. Linton. "Hush, this moment ! You mention that name and I end the matter instantly, by a spring from the window ! What you touch at present you may have ; but my soul will be on that hill-top before you lay hands on me again. I don't want you, Edgar : I'm past wanting you."

Again the true note is struck. "What you touch at present you may have ; but my soul will be on that hill-top before you lay your hands on me again !" There we have the expression of wifely duty—of bodily duty, that is, because she had never had more to promise Edgar Linton. There we have the yearning for the hill-tops, always the heathery, curlew-haunted hill-tops. There, too,

we have that choice of burial ground which afterwards, and in a cruder fashion, was to mark the last moments of Heathcliff. Even in death they were not divided, so far as the soul and aching heart went; and their marriage, so far as this world went, was to be consummated up yonder on the heights, when clay met clay against the riven coffin boards. Ah, surely this was love—love of the old fashion, that dreaded neither storm nor charnel-house. We have grown too weak for such strong meat perhaps; yet surely the dullest ears can hear the music of it, and the truth. As well deny the wind's power, or the sun's; this love of Catherine and Heathcliff falls upon us, note by note, with a persuasion which is neither man's nor woman's, but which belongs to the singing wind, and the big, wild voice of a Nature who will have her way.

If Nature did not lead Emily Brontë—nay, rather go hand in hand with her—who did? Follow the after-plot of *Wuthering Heights*, and mark its conclusion, inevitable, satisfying. Cathy dies, and henceforth there is the one big figure in the book—the figure of Heathcliff, who remembers—remembers, as better men forget. There is no second love for him; there could be none; and again it is inevitable that he should grow soured beyond belief, savage beyond conception, when all that spells the world

to him is gone. His gaze is upon this world, not upon the promise of the next; lose Cathy in the flesh, and he loses her for ever, is Heathcliff's guiding thought; and again he snarls, and growls, and curses, just as the north wind does between the bleak wall-crevices of Haworth Moor.

Yet in Heathcliff, too, there is that stuff of soul which ranges out beyond the coffin, the mould, the blind worm that hides beneath the sod. We are all of us, just now and then, a little greater than the flesh that hems us in; and Heathcliff, stronger to the last than we poor folk can be, is greatest at the moment of his death.

We will not pry upon those final scenes; we will not dissect them, nor profane; enough that, amid such gruesome odours of the coffin and the flesh dissolving into earth, we still hear that clear, triumphant note which Cathy sounded long ago. Their souls are on the hill-tops still—hers and Heathcliff's—while Linton's crouches in the valley-lands, away out of sight of the woman he married, of the lover he had robbed of his true mate. Again and again, in these last scenes, there is that weird insistence of the spiritual, that plain, unswerving treatment of the flesh which is our prison-house. Heathcliff—Heathcliff the morose, the cruel, the Ishmael among his kind—confesses to his faith in ghosts.

So does every man who has walked lonely on the lonely heath, who has felt the fret of spirit underlying the palpable, cold bluster of the storm. Heathcliff has faith in ghosts ; he has faith that spirits stalk this cruder earth ; above all, he has faith that souls can marry, though bodies have been long kept asunder. He dies, and is laid to rest, with the gorse and the waving bracken and the tough, sweet-scented hay above him, beside the body of his mate. And so this book of gloom and tragedy ends happily ; it ends, as the world of heath revolves beneath the stars, inevitably ; it ends with a sense of the world's injustice, and the hope of recompense ; and our hearts go out in yearning for the happiness of Heathcliff the misunderstood, and of Cathy, who is the daintiest heroine of fiction or of fact.

A lesser artist would have stayed here, content with her own triumph. But Emily Brontë goes farther. She has finished her book ; and, yet, by quiet and quieter movements of her music she leads us into that atmosphere of peace in which she knows her favourites — Heathcliff and Cathy—must rest. Again we are compelled to reverence, not the conception alone, not the development alone, of *Wuthering Heights*, but the sure courage that will not stoop to end where recognized laws say "end"—which goes forward to the true, inevitable finish. Lower

and lower sounds the music; gentler and gentler grows the voice of that wild tempest which has wrecked the peace of Haworth Moor; till, at the last, we have a passage that is but a whisper of the summer breeze among the bells of heath.

"I lingered——"

So the book ends, and there's never a word too much, never a word too little, in the whole of it.

Emily Brontë! What is there more to say of her? The bravest and the sweetest soul that ever saw the truth and wrote it down. She is neither man nor woman; a woman could never have conceived the book, a man could never have wrought such subtle lines of tenderness, and truth, and purity, as she has done. Like Heathcliff himself, she is above and beyond us; she is a creature of the moors, a foster-daughter, as it were, of Nature; and hers are the secrets that running waters murmur as they wash their peaty banks—the secrets that the lapwing shares—the secrets of things old and unalterable, hidden deep beneath the outer fret and struggle of what we call the world of progress.

She must, we are sure, have kept always a warm heart for her brother Branwell. She was not one to blame lightly, for she had watched the hill-top thorn grow crooked under stress of western gales, and she understood, as few can understand, the great primeval forces that shape

both trees and men into the final mould. Talent this unhappy lad possessed; it may be genius; but he was cursed by waywardness, and drifted, like one lacking oars and rudder, across the waters of his days—drifted, and left a ripple here and there to mark his going, and vanished into silence. Yet he, too, has his place as a foundation-stone of all his sister's work. It was Emily's part to be steadfast, to suffer and be strong; it was Branwell's to riot and be weak; yet had there been no Branwell Brontë, to give a human meaning to the wild traditions, the wilder stories, on which his sister fed, there had been no *Wuthering Heights*. Branwell is dead, and the time to judge his faults is past; unhappy, sinning, seeking he knew not what by tangled and by miry paths, his memory has still for us some magic, some touch of spoiled romance. Nor was his life in vain; for out of his very sins and follies his sister made more threads than one, from which to weave the finished piece called *Wuthering Heights*.

And now to finish. To say in a word what defies the intrusion of any spoken word. To talk of that "Spirit of the Moors" which is strong as rock, yet airy as a dream. It is a little corner of the world, this heath that lies between Wycoller and Oxenhope, between Haworth and old Hebden Brigg; yet somehow it is the touch-stone of all romance, and spaciousness, and

glamour. Never a swart farm-bigging, shouldering the lonely hill-top, but has its story ; never a wrinkled slope of pasture but knows a Saga-tale, of hunters who hunted the forbidden hare, of keepers who came to fight, of battles that were fierce, and fair, and truculent ; never a sheltered dene but smiles at memories of lad and lass, and the ways and songs of mating times long-dead. Out yonder is Wycoller Dene, whither the wooers used to walk, once upon a day, from distant Oxenhope, for the Dene was full of bonnie maids as a winter thorn is full of haws ; and in Wycoller we have as much of legend as would fill a country-side in any land less favoured than our Craven. The Cunliffes who lived, and feasted, and were merry in that dismantled hall—the Cunliffe who lay a-dying, and ordered his favourite pair of fighting-cocks to be brought to the bed-foot, and died cheering on the winning bird—that other far-off Cunliffe who rides on the West wind of stormy nights, rides, a ghost on a ghostly horse, all down the Dene, and between the guardian hollies of the doorway, and up the stone steps into the bed-room of the wife he loved and wronged and killed three centuries ago or so. These things are from of old, and from of old the wind brings back to us, as we stand beside Wycoller's stream, the fragrance and the strength of happier days. The violets blew softer then, the primroses looked

outward from their nooks with a deeper and more wistful look in their great eyes ; the blood ran redder in men's veins, for love or hate, and women were as full of panting life as thorn-set roses are when the sun is in their hearts. Forgotten now, as a dead man out of mind, is old Wycoller Dene ; so much the better, for we have time—as love has time among the ruins—to sit and dream, and let that old-time madness of the blood rise once again and take us captive. The crowded ways of men—the street's confusion, the statesman's harvest of clapping hands, the hard-won ease of houses bigger than our needs —all these are blown away like smoke by the winds of Wycoller, and our eyes are opened, and we know. Winter, or pride of summer, all is one. There is never a day so stark, so sleety, or so dread, in Wycoller Dene, but has its steady sunshine—the sunshine of Romance, who is man's best friend on earth.

Yet we can leave Wycoller, and go east across the pathless moor, and yet have witchery with us like a constant friend. Here the moor-fowl nested yester-year, and there the bog has tales of death to tell, if it could but open its dumb, greedy mouth ; up yonder, where the heather hugs the sky, there was treasure hid when Prince Charlie came marching west of Pendle Hill, and when the Stanbury folk were doubtful lest he and his Hielandmen should come nearer still.

REV. PATRICK BRONTË.

MISS ELLEN NUSSEY.

To face p. 280.

Yonder again, where the sunset flames, and pales, and flames again, there is the dreary tavern whence a man went outward to his death, the murderers stealing shadow-like behind him. Here the old Squire fought with his own keepers, and worsted them for sport; down in the hollow there, where oak-fern trembles in the breeze, there was a great and tender passion brought to ripeness; in yonder strip of intake, hard won from the heath, a man worked lonely, worked eagerly, worked till he dropped in his own paces, faithful to the labour he had set himself. See the deep cleft there, hidden by its beard of ling and bilberry; go back a space of fifty years or so, and count the poachers as they come—ten, twenty, thirty—grim-visaged men and dour, who march together, their will the wind's will, to forage where they list. The Squire has keepers—true, but over-few to match these stalwart enemies of written law. The Squire, the Parson, and the Lawyer may drink their wine below there in the sheltered valley-lands; but the poachers are the magistrates on Haworth Moor, and the unwritten law they follow says that all which flies, or swims, or runs upon four legs, is any man's to take.

Watch them go up and up, their dogs beside them. Watch the last flicker of the dying moon light up their swarthy faces. Then let the stillness fall, the starshine and the silence, broken only

by the bark of farmers' dogs, the fretful protest of the grouse. Sit down awhile upon a clump of ling—the season of the year is dry enough—and let the past and present mingle, with the reek of hay and mistal-sweets to help the reverie.

About you, where you sit, is Haworth Moor, ripe-rich in story before the Brontës knew it. About you are the old, unconquerable tales, the old, unconquerable roughness of the heath ; and truth, like a wistful, homeless maid, sits hand-in-hand with you. Yet about you, as you sit, there is the nearer presence of the Brontës. Visions come and go upon the smooth night-wind —of Emily striving to endure, and to perfect her masterpiece—of the old father, querulous amid the genius he has begotten—of Branwell, escaping from the tavern window with a skin too full of wine and foolishness.

It is enough. Let the dreams die down, and hearken to the lowing of the kine, and sup the satisfying fragrance of the mistals and the heath. This is Haworth Moor, and until time is not, and the world is crumpled into primeval space, the moor-born heart will neither waver nor forget.

Listen again, now that the peevish wind gets up to scatter peace. What is the cry that comes across the bracken and the ling? It is the cry of Cathy, beating with frail hands against the window-bars. "I want to come in. I'm come

home. I lost my way on the moor. Let me come in ! "

Louder the wind grows, and louder still. It is Heathcliff's voice. He is lying prone in the little chamber, sobbing his heart out, and crying on the ghost that once was flesh and blood.

Again the wind dies down. And from a neighbouring mistal comes the honey-hearted scent of kine.

THE BRONTËS AS ARTISTS AND AS PROPHETS

By J. KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN

An Address delivered to the Brontë Society, at Sheffield, January 18, 1908

THE BRONTËS AS ARTISTS AND AS PROPHETS

THE reluctance that has drawn from your extreme courtesy a third invitation to address the Brontë Society is part of what one feels in being called upon to deal, in any critical way, with young and splendid writers who were dear women. Were? Isn't it better to say, *are*? For me, Emily and Charlotte Brontë are not dead, but alive. It is as if they might hear us. . . . I do not attribute this daunting sense of them to imagination. It is real—an effect of their work's vitality. This is their triumph. The sensitive passionate souls of the sisters passed into what they wrote, and still confront us, defiant, delicate; it is almost reasonable to say, conscious. Well, one must either speak the truth about their writings as one sees it, or be silent; and, now that their fame is established, now that nothing matters, I would rather have kept silence, reverently.

However, it has occurred to me that the Brontë Society may be wondering if its usefulness

is not near an end for the same reason. The Society's main purpose in the beginning was to establish their fame more surely. Its main purpose now is of course educational. Is an interest in the Brontës adequate for any society as an educational purpose? Perhaps not. But one may state the causes of its intensity and endurance, and try to see, clearly, what the fiery spirit of their work should mean to the world. Test it in all ways first. They sit here listening, with sincere, pathetic eyes. But those eyes have never quailed; and, after all, the pure gold of any literature is not to be had and weighed but after a fierce assay. *They* know this, fearlessly.

What, then, has criticism to say of the work they did so young, with such sincerity? Hard things. I suppose there are not four other classical novels in the world that have been found unsatisfactory from so many points of view as *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and *Wuthering Heights*. The critic who holds that any fair and sane estimate of life is humorously balanced may reject them all but *Villette*, and say of even this that it lacks warmth or that the balance is due to a sense of justice more than to humour. The others fret him with passionate intention, and with certain frank narrownesses. The realist—by whom I understand the critic insisting that, whatever stress there be of imagination and feeling people in

HAWORTH FROM THE MOOR EDGE.

HAWORTH CHURCH IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S TIME.

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novels should act and speak as people would in life—the realist sides with the humorist ; and for him *Villette*, though true, is not a great book as modern novels go. Its realism seems to have quenched something. *Wuthering Heights* conforms to the letter of his law, but is greatly false to the spirit. In *Shirley* the heroine and Caroline Helstone often talk like writing stylists, and so does Rose Yorke, rebuking her mother at twelve years of age. Jane Eyre argues with a melodramatic Rochester in the same *précieuse* diction, for which there is only this to be said, that it fits with her deportment. We are prepared for it by a school-girl conversation in which Miss Helen Burns, who is thirteen, remarks with great precociousness and elegance : "I have been wondering how a man who wished to do right could act so unjustly as Charles the First sometimes did ; and I thought what a pity it was that, with his integrity and conscientiousness, he could see no further than the prerogatives of the Crown." At thirteen, Helen Burns laments her "wretchedly defective nature," and, in a passage of pulpit eloquence that any clergyman might envy, tells how "the pale human soul" shall "brighten to the seraph." In conception and execution alike, the story is naïve. For the critic who demands what is nowadays called a yarn, *Jane Eyre*, however, puts into the shade all else that either sister wrote ; and he,

for his part, cannot imagine that Charlotte—who produced it for the market—returned to sober studies of her own free will : she must have listened fatally to George Henry Lewes. Caring less for humour and realism in a novel than for the romantic, this critic finds that Charlotte's powers declined ; and that Emily's never attained to that mellowness of smooth performance which is agreeable to those who love a story for its own sake.

Nor may we dismiss the critics as mutually destructive. They will not presently, like the Kilkenny cats, have done. Each tells a part of the adverse truth, and the novels have to face the sum of these parts, not a difference or a quotient. From any technical point of view, however large, faults enough may be seen in each of the Brontë books to make material for an instructive essay. A volume of such essays might be terrible.

There is, however, another sort of critic, whose judgments are not technical. There is the publisher's reader. He tries to estimate selling value in the manuscripts he handles. Well, you know the history of *Wuthering Heights*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and *The Professor*. It is nothing out of the way. And, times having changed, and books with them, it is interesting to ask oneself if either of the four *important* books we are consider-

ing would be at once accepted now, as a first novel ?

To myself, as a working writer, the acceptance of Charlotte's books at all, *as they stand*, is strangely hard to imagine. I will tell you why in a moment. Certainly, in these days of an overcrowded market, the publisher who should risk his money on even an unknown *Jane Eyre* would feel that he was indulging a rashness. *Jane Eyre* has unmistakably what is known as selling value ; once fairly under way, it is a great yarn ; but it starts too slowly, and is too much more than a yarn, to please the sort of publisher who would like it most on that account ; is at once too ingenuous and too stilted for a publisher willing to admit quality. In any case he would want it to begin at the twelfth chapter. You must plunge *in medias res*. *Shirley* moves so quietly and so naturally, a panorama of real life without constructive principle or visible plot, that I suppose no professional reader could nowadays feel anything but despair of its appeal—a despair intensified, not relieved, by the searching truth of its psychology and the wealth of its exquisite literary beauties. These are not "selling qualities," and the publication of *Shirley* as a first book would be a quixotism. As for *Villette*—impossible ! It is a novel for bilingual readers, and he would find it tame. Moreover, one hunts

on a false scent for a hero, and in the end is disappointed—faults not now excused. Emily Brontë's masterpiece might, on the other hand—I think it would—have an easier birth and kinder welcome now than killed her young ambition. Its energy is modern and tremendous. Its direct unhalting march is modern. But the temperamental strangeness of its atmosphere and people looks more morbid than it can have looked in those days of romanticism; and there is a great deal of dialect. In all likelihood, *Wuthering Heights* would have to go the round.

What does it signify? The immediate saleability of a book was never a measure of its true value; never can be: it is only a measure of culture and alertness in the reading public. Worse novels are published every year by thousands, not all of them at the author's cost or risk. Novels illiterate and vicious pass the selling standard; banal and vulgar novels are sold by the hundred thousand copies. But is there nothing, then, in the judgment of a publisher's reader? No author who is wise will say so. It does uphold against the newcomer some artistic canons of the time, if only because they happen to be canons of success. They have been arrived at in a keen competition of craftsmen. The art of making novels in all kinds has been so developed by this competition since the Brontës wrote, that one is

obliged to admit the existence, in many classics, of defects from which the most trivial piece of work in the same kind is nowadays exempt. They endure, it seems, by virtue of qualities that override craftsmanship.

Such classics are like the works of certain old masters of painting, clumsy in design, or strange in colour, or faulty in drawing, but big with some human worthiness to which design, colour, and drawing are secondary. In admiring them well, what is our mental attitude? We do not blink their weaknesses: that would be to pay false worship and to harm ourselves and art: for we discern their strength truly when most critical. Whoever should say that Tintoret painted trees well would make us doubt that he had any true sense of the master's imagination and depth of soul. Trees are painted better by English art students. If Tintoret were painting nowadays with such unequal and rude execution, he would never become famous: probably Tintoret would starve, or take to screeving. What of that? If we ever have a re-incarnation of Tintoret in fact, his genius will of course assimilate the art of the new age, and produce trees nearly as good as anybody's.

But, with many fine exceptions, there is nowadays an immense manufacture of worthless novels; and, I am concerned at least as much

for the art of fiction as for a just appreciation of the Brontës, when I attempt to judge their work by the best canons of the time. Consider frankly its defects of craftsmanship, and so arrive at a firm and illuminating estimate of its actual merits. It will be found, I think, that these are poetic and ethical rather than artistic.

Charlotte Brontë's estimate of Jane Austen helps us to our estimate of herself. Mr. Lewes has commended to her that placid worker as "One of the greatest artists . . . with the nicest sense of means to an end, that ever lived." She allows the nice sense of means to an end; but "Can there be a great artist without poetry?" she demands—and Mr. Lewes has no rejoinder. He should have written, she would say, "One of the greatest craftsmen." Her conception of a great artist is right; and if her own use of means to an end be wanting in skill, or if her purpose be something other than artistic, the poetry is always there. Emily's use of means to an end is masterly, and in its rude compelling fashion unsurpassed. Moreover, Emily's purpose *is* artistic, not at all didactic or controversial. If Mr. Lewes had had the tact and insight to write to the other sister a letter of respectful homage on her strength of handling, we should have thought more highly of his critical acumen, though he had said with Charlotte that *Wuthering*

Heights was sinister, dark and goblin-like. In Emily, at least, he might have recognized a great artist, a craftsman who was also a poet, a savage Michael Angelo of letters. But she wrought too much in the realm of imagination to be appraised by Mr. Lewes.

Let that pass. Charlotte's artistry is now in question as it appears to novelists and critics of this generation. She wrote two kinds of stories—what is known as the romantic "yarn," and the story of real life. Her preference was for the latter. Her first approach to a publisher was made with an example of it, *The Professor*, and she returned to it. She is best known for a single example of the romantic yarn. When *The Professor* was rejected and she began *Jane Eyre*, it was because, as she says a little contemptuously, the publishers wanted "something more imaginative and poetical—something more consonant with a highly wrought fancy, with a taste for pathos." The story notion of a mad wife or relative confined in a secret chamber was in vogue: it may be found in one of the clever and forgotten novels of Miss Jewsbury, the friend of Mrs. Carlyle. Charlotte made the very most of it—with a depth and pure intensity of feeling that no writer of the time could match. It was a story notion strictly: in actual life, no such secret could be kept from the household, and nobody would suppose it

could. This is what Leslie Stephen had in mind when he called *Jane Eyre* a baseless nightmare. Charlotte herself must have been very well aware of the flaw when she wondered "if the analyses of other fictions read as absurdly as that of *Jane Eyre* always does"; and, in *Villette*, the parallel episode of the pseudo-ghost is handled with a strict regard for what is possible. But see how much more finely the nightmare is invested with proper circumstance and human meaning than that of *The Castle of Otranto* or *Frankenstein*. What modern art has to say against this fantastic order of romance is not that it was naïve—art sometimes is—but that in spirit and execution alike it was bound to be in a measure insincere. Charlotte Brontë came nearest of any one to being wholly serious with it; she made a step backward from Scott, however, and the wonder is that she is so little blamed for doing so. The true apostolical succession in romantic fiction is from Scott to Stevenson and Weyman and Hewlett. The true practice of the art is based upon a romantic way of seeing real events. It selects, distorting nothing, eschewing improbabilities. It selects romantic deeds and personages, paints romantic scenes with poetry and passion, but has a care that every scene and stroke of the detail shall be convincing. It is a practice much more difficult—more masculine.

How is the art of *Jane Eyre* at outs with it?

I have mentioned Helen Burns's impossible precocity. I do not think it open to dispute that some of the conversations between Jane and Rochester are still more ludicrous. They have a schoolgirl air of mingled propriety and awfulness that is nowhere to be matched in any book accepted as a classic. Mr. de Selincourt has already said this. But more; the propriety is often priggish on Jane's part, and passion in the most tempestuous moments speaks in polished phrases. *Jane Eyre* is a very "young" book. That this fact does not explain all its imperfections, and that these were mainly due to Miss Brontë's following bad models with her critical faculty asleep or silenced, appears to me plain from the truth and fine womanliness of *Shirley*, which came but two years later. Plain, too, from *The Professor*, which is not so girlish either, though it came first. And I am very sure that Charlotte Brontë never desired to pin her reputation upon the only novel that commends itself to Mr. Chesterton. She indeed regarded *Jane Eyre* as an attack upon conventionality; and the relentless study of bigotry in St. John Rivers, the strong plea that love is greater than any human doctrines, and the rehabilitation of the governess, must have made her glad, to the last, that she had written it. But she knew its faults as well as any one, I think. In *Villette* there are no seventeenth-century bookish conversations. In

either *Villette* or *Shirley* there is not an improbability that matters.

Those who believe that Charlotte Brontë's greatest gift was the power to write a fascinating story hold that, in doing these later books, she had missed her way. Well, she chose with her eyes open. I think she was true to her character in the choice, if not to a purely artistic ideal ; and I doubt very much if a resolve to spin yarns for their own sake, even in a modern realistic manner, could have given us the spontaneous and splendid self-realization of *Shirley*, a book to which Mr. Meredith and the whole feminist movement owe much of their inspiration. But, says Mr. Chesterton, *Jane Eyre* is the unique novel in English literature of the nineteenth century "where the dangerous life of a good person was thoroughly expressed." I do not know that "thoroughly" is the best word ; "exorbitantly" seems to me a better one ; but I do suppose that Mr. Chesterton puts a finger there upon the secret of the book's popularity and very life. The heroine is good beyond all expectation. She is so good, that, if Rochester had not been vain egregiously, as well as an unlicked cub grown rather monstrous—or if he had even been convincingly presented from the first, his secret told us—the popular verdict to-day must have been that she is righteous overmuch. His look of undesirability balances

Jane's priggishness and school propriety ; otherwise the terrible plight of the man, chained to a vampire, and loving Jane at last with his whole despairing nature, would have made even the prudes aware that what is called a woman's "goodness" may in certain crises be selfish and petty. One is tempted to quote the preface : "Conventionality is not morality ; self-righteousness is not religion." But, for the sake of the yarn, Jane acts conventionally in the crisis. She runs away, leaving Rochester to his intolerable fate ; and there is even a suggestion that his blindness, the consequence of an act of splendid heroism, was meant by Providence to "chasten" him for infidelity to the vampire. Was it so meant by Charlotte Brontë, the Providence who arranged it? Absurd ! It is part of the yarn.

If, as she held, pure love is greater than human doctrines, it is greater, too, than human laws ; and Jane Eyre's goodness would have been far nobler, if less popular, had she done what love in its highest expression must always make us do—forget ourselves for another. Why is Rivers introduced, but to bring this knowledge home to us? Even in a missionary enterprise she cannot forget herself for *him* ; and, called by a supernatural voice, she goes back to her lover. But the conventions are still respected, the vampire wife having by that time perished. It is a vastly ingenious plot on

melodramatic lines ; and, as I have said, it is wrought out with extraordinary feeling and imagination. These give to the story a certain greatness. But these, by themselves, are never passports to popularity. In the case of *Jane Eyre*, they do not seem to have been passports even to realism ; and my own judgment of this story is that its *naïvetés* and unnatural notes might have ultimately killed it in spite of all, if it had not said so much for "goodness." The bold attack upon a certain type of bigot, sincere in every word of it, is only incidental ; yet it is the content most characteristic of Charlotte Brontë as a moralist.

Let me not be thought contemptuous of selling value in a work of fiction. It is another term for readableness. The first business of a novel, whether yarn or story of common life, work of art or work of morals, is to get itself read. But there are various kinds of attractiveness. Turn now from *Jane Eyre* to *Shirley* and *Villette*, and see how modern canons are applied to judge the selling value of these.

For a story of common life the canons are stricter than for a yarn. Its interest must depend wholly upon treatment, and therefore, in modern practice, such a story commonly begins in a striking way, so as to enlist our interest at once in its chief character or characters, and to distinguish these from the rest. They are

seen passing through some definite phase or experience. All the incidents, all subordinate figures, all detail, are introduced and ordered with a view to the definite purpose. They make for a definite ending. It has been found possible, by these means, to arrest and keep attention for studies of life that are true to the most normal experience, and that point their own morals. But in Charlotte Brontë's time there was no such craftsmanship of realism; and, in differing ways, *Shirley* and *Villette* fail to consult the ease and pleasure of the reader by such means. *Villette* is autobiographical; *Shirley* I have called a panorama. We go to them first either because we have been assured that it is very well worth our while, or because we are honestly studious. They are caviare to the general.

But what a feast for the lover of literature is *Shirley*! Its fresh outlook and its beauty of feeling are priceless. And what a wise and graceful mind informs the story of Lucy Snowe! More craftsmanship might have made them better known, and especially sixty years back; but now that they are accepted classics, the lack of it is not complained of. The craftsmanship, such as it is, has the great merit of being characteristic, like that of all spontaneous art. Why is the hero slow to appear, and slower still to reveal himself completely? Because Charlotte Brontë was not

a woman who loved at sight, but had first to see her lover critically, and then to esteem him. Why, indeed, do all her people grow upon us in the same way? As she avowed, her sense of character was not quite intuitive, not rash; and I believe her interest in exact and full appreciations was one of the main causes why she wrote. However, in a book, the method of slow revelation has drawbacks unless it be used for some particular purpose of a plot. It fogs the undiscerning reader, suspends and baffles his sympathies, and has led poor critics to say that Charlotte Brontë's men were not well seen by herself. Mr. Chesterton prefers the superficial pen of Jane Austen in this respect. Mr. de Selincourt, while sensible that Charlotte's "conception of her *dramatis personæ* is nearly always true," thinks that the manner she chooses to reveal them is not only crudely inartistic but false to life. The manner, I think, is true to life. That is why it is inartistic. In the case of Rochester, which Mr. de Selincourt has especially in mind, that fantastic look of the man is due to his false position, which is unknown to the reader. We have not, in English literature, a novelist whose grasp of his *dramatis personæ* is more absolute than Charlotte Brontë's. Their inmost secret, their subtlest mutabilities of mood and action, are known to that searching gaze, as well as their outward aspect and the effects

they make upon each other. They are not, all of them, known sympathetically; the means her scrutiny has used are often coldly analytical; but you must trust her insight. The mischief is that you are required to do so; the undiscerning reader sees a character behave inexplicably, or provokingly; and, of all Charlotte Brontë's faults of craftsmanship, this is the most damaging. The early and decorative fault of endowing people with artificial speech is by comparison venial. Happily, we have consented to look at life without misgivings as she pictures it.

Why, again, has *Shirley* no structure, no real story plot? Because Charlotte Brontë's way, in life itself, is to be a quiet observer, letting life go by: she is satisfied passively to interpret its hidden passions, to feel its beauty, and to meditate its meanings. Emily of the masculine will and imagination works equally in her own manner, a very different one. The truth is, these Brontë sisters are so interesting as women that one is best pleased to have it so. The interest in their books is autobiographical chiefly; and they are true to themselves in craftsmanship and all things. It is the secret of their greatness. All the faults we can find help us to prize what remains impeccable.

Well, what do they mean to us? What is the Brontë Society's educational stock?

There is all they had to say for women. . . . In this connection I think it fair to dissociate Charlotte Brontë from the militant sisterhood who sometimes claim her as a prophetess and leader. Her attitude to our sex is critical, but passive always. Shirley Keeldar calls herself "Captain," and takes her own way with a pretty air of mannishness, but she is never unfeminine for a moment, never stormy, or egregious, or ungraceful. And Shirley, the liveliest type of womanly independence in the books, is not Charlotte herself, but "Emily in happier circumstances." In respect of sex attitude, Charlotte's habit is rather seen in Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe. She wrote *Shirley* in chivalrous defence of womanhood against misprizing egotistical man, who in those days, and in Yorkshire, stood very much in need of her satiric handling; and there is one figure at least, that of Mr. Sympson, who, being seen from the outside only, and in a state of mind that Americans know as "hopping mad," has an air of caricature. But she accepts Robert Moore after all. And she utterly submits, in *Villette*, to the kind-hearted tyrannies of M. Paul Emanuel, which are even more eccentric than Mr. Sympson's. It is not for a notion of equality in the sexes that Charlotte Brontë contends. I think she tried to set us far too high. "Nothing ever charms me more," says Shirley, "than when I meet my

VIEW FROM HAWORTH MOOR.

FOOT-BRIDGE NEAR BRONTË WATERFALL

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superior. The higher above me, so much the better ; it degrades to stoop : it is glorious to look up." And of man in the abstract, "I would scorn to contend for empire with him—I would scorn it. Shall my left hand dispute for precedence with my right ?" No : we go to Charlotte Brontë's books to see ourselves with the clear eyes of a conscientious woman, for whom love is the greatest good in life but who can only love where she esteems highly. Her glance is piercing, and for injustice, folly, or humbug it is quite inexorable : she breathes defiance oftener than she sparkles fun : but she does us good like a medicine, and threatens nothing harmful.

I do not say she is judicial. Charlotte Brontë frankly takes the side of her sex. But, for a *parti pris*, it is fairly taken. The writing quality forfeited in some degree by championship is humour, and that loss is nearly all we have to regret in it. Some poverty of humour, a strenuous note of seriousness, at times a certain want of good spirits and happy tolerance, cause her realism to be classed below that of the greatest writers of fiction. It is sad to find no downright hearty laughs ; her very smile, when it is not beautiful with pity, has an air of quiet malice ; she does not live so warmly as to feel perfectly indulgent. For her supreme gift is to feel keenly, as Emily's is. A fuller and more

diversified contact with life than Emily's has compelled her to find accommodations; but this, alas! while dulling poetry has not made her quite serenely optimist. She needed happiness: happiness of a kind came too late. To Emily, whose need was even greater, it never came.

The cry for happiness, heard in all their work as an undertone, and uttered frankly in many passages of great beauty, seems to me to be very specially a Brontë note; and I think it is the tragic contrast between their capacity for it and the incompleteness of their lives that has won for them so many lovers. The cry has a sharpness as if they had foreseen the end. We feel an ache of tenderness for them, greater than for either Keats, or Shelley, or Chatterton. It makes critical estimates a heavy business, to be done reluctantly. When I consider the absence of any such joy of labour in *Villette* as abounds in *Shirley*, and remember the disenchantments and the griefs endured before it was written, and that nothing followed it, Charlotte Brontë's last years appear extremely grey. One likes to think that she did know happiness before she died. But it was terribly brief, and, however consoling, it had not the ecstasy of her imagination. As for her work, its vital force had ebbed as it had gained sobriety, balance, and technical excellence. The fiery and pure spirit

seems to have burned its frail envelope, as Emily's had done seven years earlier.

What have they left to us, these rare spirits, exquisitely young? Work so sincere that we are as near to them as lovers can be ever. Their very faults—Emily's her aloofness; Charlotte's her bias, and Puritanism, and preaching seriousness—their very faults endear them. We see these faults as the defects of noble qualities. They are women who have suffered much because the world will not arrange itself to the great pattern of their ideals and sharp desires; and doubtless they and all of us were happier if we smiled at it. But is the world to be without its martyrs and its prophets? Theirs is a divine discontent, by which we are to learn how the world may be made a habitation easier to smile in. They suffer for our sakes. These dear women, delicate and passionate idealists, have done what I take to be a priceless thing for an age in which conventional faiths were to crumble fast away. They put us in contact with great Nature—a Book of Revelations of which the glory is imperishable and the comfortable promise sure;—and they have done this in passages of pure and musical English, poetic and searching prose, that persuade us of the truth of their meaning by its very beauty. It is not a message to those who are happy and sure already. It is not a message to the Philistines.

It is an auricular sweet message to the chosen, in doubt and in adversity. For Charlotte, Nature has sunny tears and a soft lap; for Emily, that mystery of spiritual meaning which assures her that nothing dies, nothing is inexplicable.

> Vain are the thousand creeds
> That move men's hearts : unutterably vain :
> Worthless as withered weeds,
> Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,
> To waken doubt in one
> Holding so fast by Thine infinity.

So much poetry is nowhere else, in English writers of fiction, to be found with such an unsparing critical outlook and such sincerity of self-expression as in the Brontës. Remark, that sincerity and the critical spirit put them in touch with modern thought inseverably; and then consider, if you please, the question I asked at first, and whether their educational force is likely to be soon exhausted. Their note, as Dr. Robertson Nicoll feels it, is "fortitude." Well, freedom and perfect honesty of thought, scorn of untruth and of injustice, demand that note in all who see the shams and cruelties of men and yet keep faith in beauty, honour, love, and a great design. The demand will not abate. It grows. I am glad that no horn-eyed person has attempted a synthesis of Charlotte Brontë's

intolerances and prepossessions, her scepticisms and her beliefs, with a view to claim her for this or that political class or sect of Christian worshippers in her time. It may yet be done, doubtless. They are probably not reconcilable, these prejudices, and in any case the attempt would be unintelligent. What we honour and prize, alike in her and in her stronger sister, is the fearless, dainty spirit, true to itself as well as to the higher hope. Freedom's battle is bequeathed to ourselves.

Lyrical and heroic souls, in their own day they stood in the van of that battle, to give succour and to fight with equal helpfulness. This is why they will not be forgotten. This is the reason for a cult of Brontë worshippers, who keep their praise alive and spread their spirit.

J. KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN.

A BRONTË ITINERARY

By BUTLER WOOD

A BRONTË ITINERARY

ALTHOUGH much has been written on the topography of the novels and other places connected with the Brontë family, as far as I am aware no attempt has hitherto been made to work out an Itinerary which may be followed by those who wish to make a systematic tour of the districts concerned. For the present purpose it will not be necessary, nor is it desirable, to enter into any detailed account of the places mentioned; particulars of these must be looked for in such works as Dr. Stuart's "Brontë Country," 1888, and H. E. Wroot's "Persons and Places of the Brontë Novels," 1906. Many articles on separate places have also appeared from time to time in the *Transactions* of the Brontë Society and in magazines and newspapers. These, and others mentioned in the Bibliographies issued by the Society, may be consulted for further information.

For the sake of convenience the areas are arranged into four divisions, covering all the ground with the exception of Brussels, which is ably dealt with by Mr. M. H. Spielmann in

another part of this volume. These are as follows:—

> The Haworth Country, "Shirley" Country, Cowan Bridge and Kirkby Lonsdale, and Hathersage.

Haworth Country

If we draw, say on the one-inch ordnance map, a line cutting through Skipton, Colne, Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Bradford, Keighley, and thence back to Skipton, we shall roughly enclose the area made classic ground by *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and which will ever remain sacred as the land wherein the Brontë family passed the greater part of their lives; for within it lie Thornton, where Charlotte, Emily, Anne, and Branwell were born, and Haworth, where all except Anne are buried.

The greater part consists of the moorland ridge which separates the West-Riding from Lancashire, and which happily has changed little in aspect since the Brontë days. If the reader could stand on the western side of the Nab, a bold escarpment of millstone grit which dominates the Worth Valley at a height of 1,450 feet above the sea-level, he would be able to take in with one sweep of the eye the whole of the moorland tract which surrounds the Brontë home. Beyond the reaches of heather stretching

HAWORTH FROM THE EAST.

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away to the west are Boulsworth and Pendle Hill. On the north-west the Keighley moors rise in brown masses to the Lancashire border, while the suave contours of Rombald's Moor fill up the view on the north. Southward, the eye ranges along those billowy hills of brown and purple which roll away into Derbyshire and end in the magnificent mass of Kinder Scout.

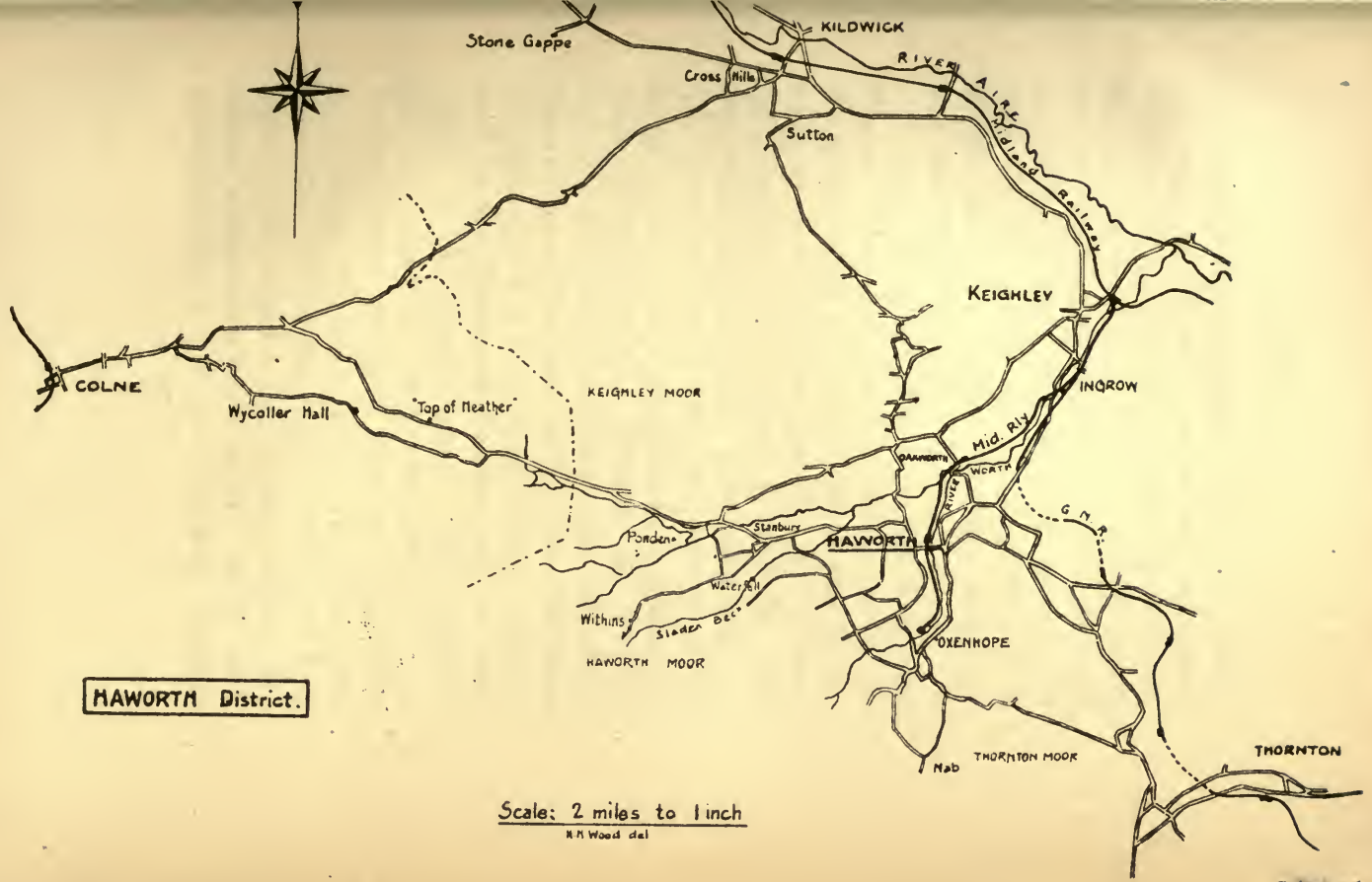
Readers familiar with *Jane Eyre* will remember with what a loving hand the moorlands are described in the twenty-eighth chapter and other portions of the book, but Emily's feeling towards them, as revealed in *Wuthering Heights*, was nothing less than a passion. Charlotte says of her that "she had a particular love for them; there is not a knoll of heather, not a branch of fern, not a young bilberry leaf, not a fluttering lark or linnet, but reminds me of her."

Those who wish to explore this region should take train to Keighley, which is on the Midland main line—nine miles from Bradford and sixteen miles from Leeds. From thence a branch line runs up the Worth Valley to Haworth, which is approached from the station by a steep rise of half a mile. At the top of the tortuous, narrow street are situated the Black Bull Inn and the Brontë Museum, and within a short distance the Church and Vicarage. The inn, too much frequented by the unfortunate Branwell, contains a replica of the chair in which he was

wont to sit on these occasions. Immediately opposite is the Brontë Museum, wherein will be found many interesting memorials of the family. With the exception of the tower, the whole of the old church was pulled down and a new building erected between 1879 and 1881. Within lie the remains of all the members of the family except Anne, who was buried at Scarborough. A Brontë memorial tablet is placed on a wall in the old tower, and in the south aisle of the church is a stained-glass window in memory of the Brontës, placed there by an American citizen. The Brontë grave lies at the south end of the communion-rail, and is marked by a brass tablet bearing the names of Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Visitors should not omit to inspect the registers containing entries relating to members of the family.

The Vicarage, standing immediately behind the church, remains unchanged, except that an additional wing has been built since the time it was occupied by the Rev. Patrick Brontë.

After inspecting these places the visitor will now be free to wander on the moor lying west of the village. Proceeding along West Lane the moor road leading past the cemetery comes into view, and if this be followed a distance of 2½ miles to the waterfall he will get a typical example of West-Riding moorland scenery. On the left are the Haworth and Stanbury Moors,


Stone Gappe
KILDWICK
Cross Hills
RIVER AIRE
Midland Railway
Sutton
KEIGHLEY
COLNE
Wycoller Hall
Top of Heather
KEIGHLEY MOOR
INGROW
Mid. Rly
HAWORTH
RIVER WORTH
G.N.R.
Ponden
Stanbury
Water Fall
Withins
Slader Beck
HAWORTH MOOR
OXENHOPE
Nab
THORNTON MOOR
THORNTON
HAWORTH District.
Scale: 2 miles to 1 inch
R.H. Wood del

To face p. 316.

and to the right is the Sladen Valley, across which the village of Stanbury can be seen perched on the hill-top. This is the "Vale of Gimmerton" described in *Wuthering Heights*. When nearing the waterfall the path slopes down the valley side to the Sladen Beck, into which the stream runs from the fall. Here will be seen a stone foot-bridge, and also a large boulder known as Charlotte Brontë's chair.

A mile and a half west from this point rises Withen's Height, 1,500 feet above the sea, on the eastern slope of which stands a small farm-house which local tradition identifies as "Wuthering Heights." The situation may be that described by Emily, but the house itself bears no resemblance to that of the story; the probability being in favour of a composition suggested by High Sunderland, near Halifax and Ponden House. The latter is situated three miles from Haworth, near the road leading from that place to Colne. It is a seventeenth-century structure built by the Heatons of Ponden, and was often visited by the Brontë sisters. Still following this road, which now begins to rise rapidly up to the moors, we shall have an opportunity of visiting Wycoller Hall, 6½ miles from Haworth. This is the Ferndean Manor of *Jane Eyre*. It is situated in Wycoller village, the nearest approach to which is by a rough track branching to the left from the road about a

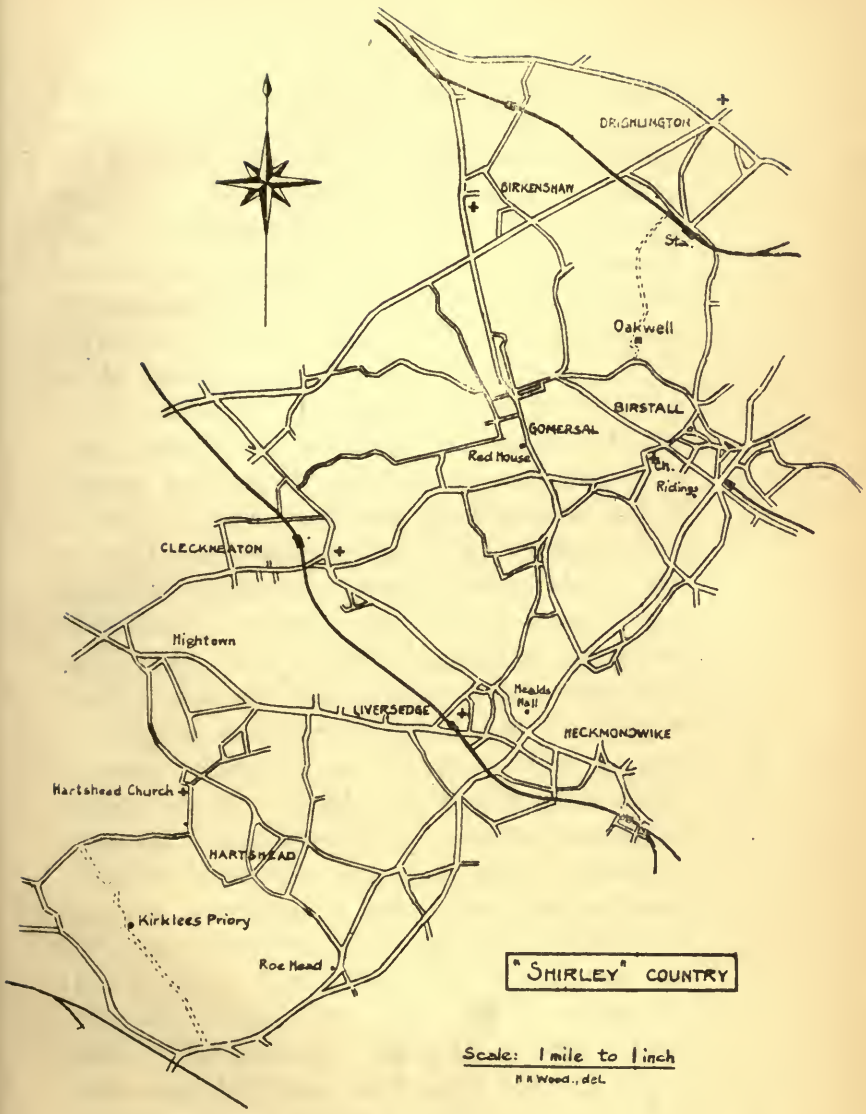
quarter of a mile before reaching Top of Heather Inn. The building is now in ruins, and was built in the latter part of the sixteenth century by a member of the Cunliffe family.

From Keighley the visitor can proceed to Stonegappe, the Gateshead Hall of *Jane Eyre*, where the early action of the story takes place, and where Charlotte acted as governess in 1839. It is a substantial building situated about two miles west of Kildwick station, which is on the Midland main line five miles north-west of Keighley.

The village of Thornton, four miles west of Bradford, is now included within the boundary of this city. The house in which the Brontë children were born is situated in the Market Street, nearly opposite the Mechanics' Institute. It is now used as a house and shop, but during the Rev. Patrick Brontë's sojourn it served as the Vicarage. There is a tablet on the wall indicating its connection with the family. The Old Church where the Rev. Patrick Brontë officiated is now in ruins; it lies on the left of the road just before entering the village, which may be reached by tram-car from the city.

The "Shirley" Country

The locality in which the action of *Shirley* took place has greatly altered since Charlotte Brontë's day. It is known as the "Heavy Woollen

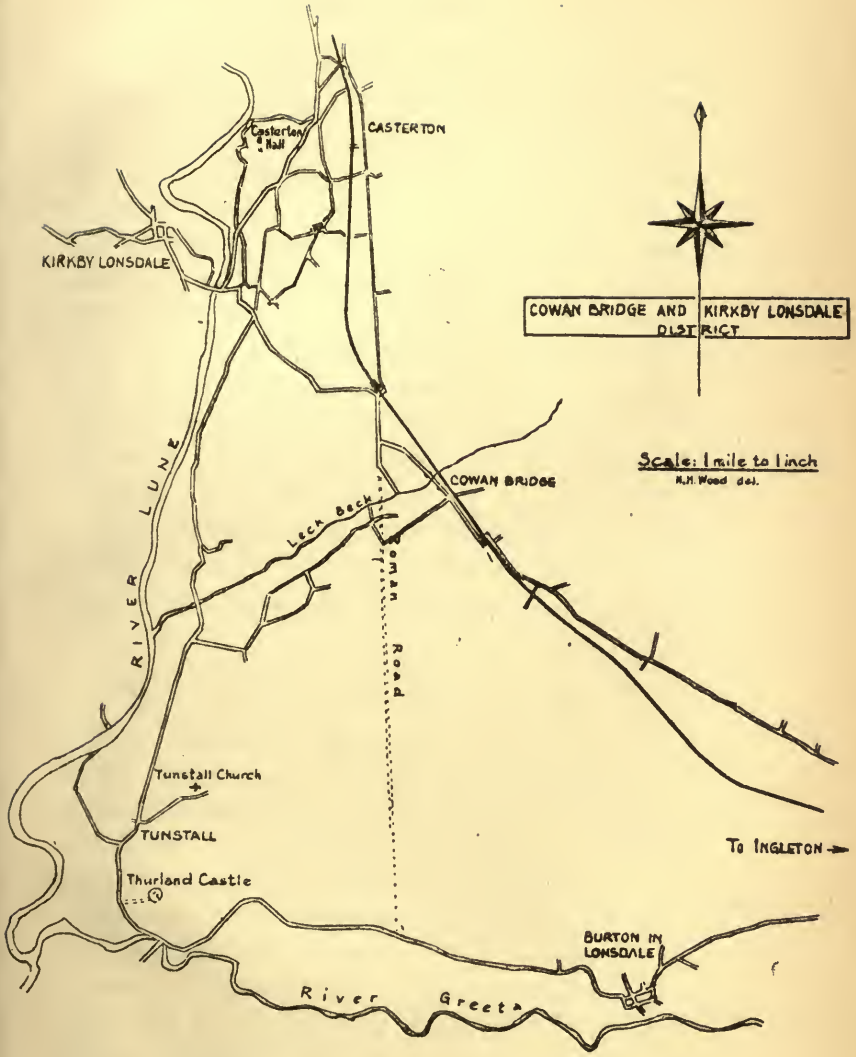

DRIGHLINGTON
BIRKENSHAW
Sta.
Oakwell
BIRSTALL
GOMERSAL
Red House
Ch.
Ridings
CLECKHEATON
Mightown
LIVERSEDGE
Healds Hall
HECKMONDWIKE
Hartshead Church
HARTSHEAD
Kirklees Priory
Roe Head
"SHIRLEY" COUNTRY
Scale: 1 mile to 1 inch
H. R. Wood., del.

District," for it is now the centre of the textile industry devoted to the production of cloth and blankets. In the early part of last century the mills were sparsely scattered in a smiling landscape : to-day the area is teeming with large factories and populous villages, but although the landscape has suffered from this industrial development, it still retains much of the charm of the earlier days.

The town of Heckmondwike, seven miles from Bradford, lies about the centre of the district, but for the purpose of a circular tour it will be best to alight at Drighlington station on the Great Northern line, from whence a field path leads down to Oakwell Hall, which is the "Fieldhead" of the story, the distance being half a mile. It is a good example of the West-Riding type of manor-house, and was built in 1583 by one Henry Batt. The building is minutely described in *Shirley*. Half a mile farther is the village of Birstall (Briarfield). Like that of Haworth, the church existing in Charlotte Brontë's time has been demolished with the exception of the tower, and replaced by a new structure. The Rev. W. Margetson Heald, vicar from 1801 to 1836, was the prototype of the Rev. Cyril Hall. Close by stands "The Rydings," where Miss Ellen Nussey lived when Charlotte first knew her, and where the author was a frequent visitor between 1832

and 1837. The exterior answers to the description of Thornfield Hall in *Jane Eyre*, but it is fairly certain that Norton Conyers, near Ripon, served as a picture of the interior of Rochester's mansion. From Birstall the visitor should proceed to Gomersal, lying half a mile farther west, where Red House (Briarmains) is situated. This was the residence of Joshua Taylor, a sturdy and enterprising manufacturer, who figures in the story as Hiram Yorke. His two daughters, Mary and Martha (Rose and Jessie Yorke), were Charlotte's school companions at Roe Head. Close by Red House is a joiner's shop which was formerly a dissenting place of worship, and it was from this building that the author heard the weird groanings and chantings described in the ninth chapter of the story.

By following the road from Gomersal to Heckmondwike for a distance of 1½ miles Heald's Hall will be reached. This was the residence of the Rev. Hammond Roberson (Rev. Matthewson Helstone) who kept a boarding-school there in Charlotte Brontë's time. About a mile to the west of this place is Liversedge Church, built at Mr. Roberson's own expense, and of which he was vicar. A quarter of a mile beyond this stands the house where the Rev. Patrick Brontë lodged when appointed to the living of Hartshead in


COWAN BRIDGE AND KIRKBY LONSDALE DISTRICT
Scale: 1 mile to 1 inch
N.H. Wood del.
Casterton Hall
CASTERTON
KIRKBY LONSDALE
RIVER LUNE
Lech Beck
COWAN BRIDGE
Cowan Head
Road
Tunstall Church
TUNSTALL
Thurland Castle
To INGLETON
BURTON IN LONSDALE
River Greeta

face p. 320.

1811, and where his daughters Maria and Elizabeth were born. Going still farther west for a mile in the direction of Hightown, the road takes a sharp bend to the south towards Hartshead Church, which is three-quarters of a mile from Hightown village. The structure possesses a fine Norman porch, and other remains of this period are to be found in the chancel. This is the Nunnely Church of the story. From the churchyard can be seen that extensive prospect as described in the twelfth chapter of the book. Roehead, the school where Charlotte attended from 1831 to 1835, is reached by passing through Hartshead village for a mile on the road to Mirfield. Miss Wooller, then the mistress, figures as Mrs. Prior in the story.

Cowan Bridge and Kirkby Lonsdale

This locality is associated with the trying school experiences of the Brontë children, so graphically described in Mrs. Gaskell's "Life," and which are reproduced with such painful fidelity in the early chapters of *Jane Eyre*.

To those who approach the district by the Midland Railway, Ingleton will be found a convenient starting-point, as conveyances can be hired for a circular tour to Tunstall Church, Kirkby Lonsdale, Casterton, Cowan Bridge and back again to Ingleton. The road passes through

Burton, 2½ miles from Ingleton. Three miles beyond, Thurland Castle is reached, and a mile farther stands Tunstall Church, near the river Lune. This is the Brocklebridge Church of *Jane Eyre*. The following passage from the story describes the experiences of the pupils of Lowood School at this place: "We had to walk two miles to Brocklebridge Church, where our patron officiated. We set out cold, we arrived at the church colder; during morning service we became almost paralysed. It was too far to return for dinner, and an allowance of cold meat and bread, in the same penurious proportion observed in our ordinary meals, was served round between the services. At the close of the afternoon service we returned by an exposed and hilly road, where the bitter wintry wind, blowing over a range of snowy summits to the north, almost flayed the skin from our faces."

The room where the children had their midday meal is immediately over the church porch. From Tunstall the road now runs due north to Kirkby Lonsdale, a distance of 3½ miles. This place, the Lowton of the story, is beautifully situated on the right bank of the Lune. The church, with its architectural features of Norman date, is well worth a visit. The view up the Lune Valley from the churchyard was considered by Ruskin to be one of the finest in England.

From here the visitor will proceed to Casterton, crossing the river by the famous Devil's Bridge, and passing Casterton Hall, which lies on the left of the road a quarter of a mile before reaching the village. This was the residence of the Rev. Carus Wilson (Rev. Mr. Brocklehurst), who took an active part in the management of Cowan Bridge Clergy Daughters' School during the Brontë period. The school was removed to Casterton in 1833, and since that time has done excellent educational work. There is accommodation for 112 girls. Leaving Casterton the road now runs south, intersecting the track of the Roman road at Kirkby Lonsdale railway station, and from thence south-east to Cowan Bridge, the Lowood of *Jane Eyre*. The Leck Beck runs through the village, which is 2½ miles from Casterton. The old school was close to the bridge, but only a part of the original premises remains. This consists of two long, bow-windowed cottages, formerly used by the teachers, and where the school kitchen was situated. The schoolrooms and dormitories are not now in existence. It was opened in 1824 for the purpose of providing an inexpensive education for the daughters of poor clergymen, who paid part of the cost, the remainder being provided by subscriptions. On the gable-end facing the road a tablet is fixed, indicating the connection of the Brontës with the institution.

The tour is completed on returning to Ingleton, four miles from Cowan Bridge. Visitors making Kirkby Lonsdale a centre can go round by Tunstal, Cowan Bridge, and Casterton, or *vice-versa*.

Hathersage

It was not until 1882 that this place began to be associated with the village of Morton in *Jane Eyre*, and even then there was no direct evidence in support of the conjecture. The matter was settled, however, by Mr. Clement Shorter in his *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*, published in 1896. It is therein recorded that Charlotte spent three weeks at this place in the summer of 1845 with her friend Miss Nussey, whose brother became vicar of Hathersage in 1844, and there can be no doubt that Charlotte had this district in mind when she described the village of Morton and the surrounding moorlands. Mr. J. J. Stead's article on Hathersage in Part IV of the Brontë Society's *Transactions* should be consulted by those who intend to visit this interesting locality.

The village is on the Dore and Chinley branch of the Midland Railway, and may be approached from Sheffield (12 miles) or from Manchester (30 miles). It is beautifully situated in the Derwent Valley, and is surrounded by

moorland very similar to that in the Haworth district. The visitor should see the church, the burial-place of the Eyre family, whose name suggested the title of the novel. Here Robin Hood's Little John is supposed to be buried. Close by is the Vicarage, mentioned in the following passage: "In crossing a field I saw the church spire before me; I hastened towards it. Near the church, and in the middle of a garden, stood a well-built though small house, which I had no doubt was the Parsonage." The house has, however, been enlarged since Charlotte Brontë's time.

The home of the Rivers family, Moor House, has been identified in a building called Moor Seats, situated three-quarters of a mile from the village, and lies not far from the edge of the moor.

In the romantic description of Jane Eyre's flight from Thornfield Hall she leaves the coach on the road leading across the open moors at Whitcross. This would be on the high-road from Sheffield which Charlotte and Miss Nussey traversed on their visit to Hathersage in 1845.

"Mr. Oliver's grand Hall in Morton Vale" is easily recognized in Brookfield Manor, an ancient mansion situated in a fine park about a mile to the north of the village.

BUTLER WOOD.

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THE BRONTË SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1893 INCORPORATED 1902

President :

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

THE objects of the Society are :—the publication of Transactions containing biographical, literary, and topographical contributions on the life and works of the members of the Brontë family ; and the preservation of literary, artistic, and personal memorials of the Brontës in the museum at Haworth.

The annual subscription, 3s. 6d., is due in advance on the 1st of January in each year. Life membership, two guineas. Members receive a copy of the yearly part of the Transactions, and are entitled to attend the meetings of the Society, together with free admission to the Brontë Museum.

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